Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

INDIAN COUNCIL
FOR
CULTURAL RELATIONS
NEW DELHI

Accession No. E 132

Call No. R 294.5924/EDG

V-07

Part II

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

DATE DUE

This book should be returned to the Library on or before the date last stamped below.

~~21-2-70~~			
8.3.70			

V-10

V-10

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

THE HARVARD ORIENTAL SERIES

VOLUME THIRTY-NINE

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

THE volumes of the Harvard Oriental Series are printed at the expense of funds given to Harvard University by Henry Clarke Warren (1854–1899), of Cambridge, Massachusetts. The third volume, Warren's *Buddhism*, is a noble monument to his courage in adversity and to his scholarship. The Series, as a contribution to the work of enabling the Occident to understand the Orient, is the fruit of an enlightened liberality which now seems to have been an almost prophetic anticipation on his part of a great political need.

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

TO THE MEMORY OF

MAURICE BLOOMFIELD

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

HARVARD ORIENTAL SERIES

EDITED BY

WALTER EUGENE CLARK

Wales Professor of Sanskrit at Harvard University

Volume Thirty-Nine

CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS

Harvard University Press

LONDON : GEOFFREY CUMBERLEGE

OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS

1952

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

THE BHAGAVAD GĪTĀ

TRANSLATED AND INTERPRETED

BY

FRANKLIN EDGERTON

Salisbury Professor of Sanskrit and Comparative Philology in Yale University

ICCR LIBRARY
E132

PART 2: INTERPRETATION AND ARNOLD'S TRANSLATION

CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS
Harvard University Press
LONDON : GEOFFREY CUMBERLEGE
OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS
1952

INDIAN COUNCIL FOR CULTURAL RELATIONS LIBRARY NEW DELHI
94852

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

Copyright, 1944, by the President and Fellows of Harvard College

Third Printing

R
294.5924
EDG

Call No. R 294.592 EDG Cat.
Acc. No. 9852 132 Price.
Shelved. Checked.

Composed on the monotype, and printed from plates,
at the Harvard University Printing Office,
Cambridge, Massachusetts, U.S.A.

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

CONTENTS OF VOLUME TWO

INTERPRETATION OF THE BHAGAVAD GĪTĀ

FIRST PART: PRELIMINARY CHAPTERS

I. Introductory 3

II. The Origins of Hindu Speculation 9

III. The Upaniṣads, and the Fundamental Doctrines of Later Hindu Thought 18

IV. Prehistory of the God of the Bhagavad Gītā 30

SECOND PART:

THE TEACHINGS OF THE BHAGAVAD GĪTĀ

V. Soul and Body 37

VI. The Nature of God 44

VII. Action and Rebirth 55

VIII. The Way of Knowledge and the Way of Disciplined Activity 62

IX. The Way of Devotion to God 70

X. Attitude towards Hindu Orthodoxy and Other Religious Beliefs 77

XI. Practical Morality 81

THIRD PART: SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

XII. Summary 87

XIII. Conclusion 91

THE SONG CELESTIAL

Sir Edwin Arnold's Translation of the Bhagavad Gītā . . . 95

Index of Words and Subjects 173

Index of Passages Quoted 177

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

FIRST PART

PRELIMINARY CHAPTERS

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

CHAPTER I

Introductory

To most good Vishnuites, and indeed to most Hindus, the Bhagavad Gītā is what the New Testament is to good Christians. It is their chief devotional book. In it many millions of Indians have for centuries found their principal source of religious inspiration.

In form, it consists mainly of a long dialog, which is almost a monolog. The principal speaker is Kṛṣṇa, who in his human aspect is merely one of the secondary heroes of the Mahābhārata, the great Hindu epic. But, according to the Gītā itself, he is in truth a manifestation of the Supreme Deity in human form. Hence the name — the Song (*gītā*) of the Blessed One or the Lord (*Bhagavad*).[1] The other speaker in the dialog is Arjuna, one of the five sons of Pāṇḍu who are the principal heroes of the Mahābhārata. The conversation between Arjuna and Kṛṣṇa is supposed to take place just before the battle which is the main theme of the great epic. Kṛṣṇa is acting as Arjuna's charioteer. Arjuna sees in the ranks of the opposing army a large number of his own kinsmen and intimate friends. He is horror-stricken at the thought of fighting against them, and forthwith lays down his weapons, saying he would rather be killed than kill them. Kṛṣṇa replies, justifying the fight on various grounds, the chief of which is that man's real self or soul is immortal and independent of the body; it "neither kills nor is killed"; it has no part in either the actions or the sufferings of the body. In response to further questions by Arjuna, he gradually develops views of life and destiny as a whole, which it is the purpose of this book to explain. In the course of the exposition he declares himself to be the Supreme Godhead, and reveals to Arjuna, as a special act of grace, a vision of his mystic supernal form. All this apparently goes on while the two armies stand drawn up in battle array, waiting to attack each other. This dramatic absurdity need not concern us seriously. It is likely that the Bhagavad Gītā was not a part of the original epic narrative. Possibly it was composed, or inserted in its present position, by a later interpolator.[2] To be sure, he must have had in

[1] More fully and exactly, the title of the work is "the mystic doctrines (*upaniṣad*) sung (or proclaimed) by the Blessed One."

[2] Such interpolations are numerous in the Mahābhārata; so numerous that we may fairly regard them as a regular habit. The great epic early attained such prestige among the Hindus that later authors were eager to win immortality for their works by framing them in so distinguished a setting. If the author of the Bhagavad Gītā used an older work to frame his own, he merely followed a custom which was not only common, but seemed

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

mind the dramatic situation in which he has placed the Gītā, for he repeatedly makes reference to it. But these references are purely formal and external; they do not concern the essentials of the work. We must think of the Gītā primarily as a unit, complete in itself, without reference to its surroundings. Its author, or whoever placed it in its present position, was interested chiefly in the religious doctrines to be set forth, not in external dramatic forms.

This is not to say that the author was lacking in artistic power. He was, on the contrary, a poet of no mean capacity. Indeed, we must think of his work as a poem: a religious, devotional poem. Its appeal is to the emotions rather than to the intellect. It follows that in order to understand the Gītā one must have a certain capacity for understanding its poetic, emotional point of view. One must be able and willing to adopt the poet's attitude: to feel with him. I say, to feel with him: not necessarily to think with him. It is possible to understand and enjoy sympathetically a poetic expression of an emotional attitude without sharing the poet's intellectual opinions. Philosophically speaking, the attitude of the Gītā is mystical. A mystic would probably prefer to say that it appeals to the mystic intuition, rather than to the emotions, as I put it. That is a question of terms, or perhaps better of philosophic outlook. My mystic critic would at any rate agree that it does not appeal to the reasoning faculty of mankind. The "opinions" which it presupposes or sets forth are not so much "opinions" in the intellectual sense as emotional — or, let us say if you like, intuitional — points of view. They are not supported by logic; they are simply proclaimed, as immediately perceived by the soul, or revealed by the grace of God. It is not my purpose to discuss their validity. That would indeed be futile. To the mystic they are above reason, to the rationalist below it; to both they are disconnected with it. Either you accept them immediately, without argument, or you do not. Argument will not move you in either case. But even a convinced rationalist, if he has some power of poetic appreciation, can follow much of the Gītā's presentation with sympathy, the sort of sympathy which would be inspired in him by any exalted poetry.

The poetic inspiration found in many of the Gītā's lines[3] can hardly be fully appreciated unless they are presented in a poetic form. We are fortunate in having a beautiful English rendering by Sir Edwin Arnold, from which those who cannot read Sanskrit may get, on the whole, a good idea of the living spirit of the poem. It takes a poet to reproduce poetry. Arnold was a poet, and a very gifted one. I am very glad to be able to re-

---

to the Hindu mind entirely natural and innocent. The Hindus of ancient times had little notion of what we consider the rights of authorship. To their minds any literary composition belonged to the world, not to its author.

[3] Not all of them; it must be confessed that the Gītā is sometimes commonplace.

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

produce his rendering in this volume. My own function is that of an analytic commentator; a more humble function, but one which has its uses, particularly in the case of a work that was produced in a place and at a time so remote from us.

This remoteness in time and scene makes exceptionally important one of the critic's duties: that of making clear the historical setting of his author. As every author, even the most inspired of poets and prophets, is a product of his environment, so we cannot understand the Bhagavad Gītā without knowing something of doctrines which flourished in its native land, during and before its time. It was composed in India, in Sanskrit, the ancient sacred and literary language of Brahmanic civilization. We do not know its author's name (indeed, almost all the early literature of India is anonymous). Nor can we date it with any accuracy; all that we can say is that it was probably composed before the beginning of our era, but not more than a few centuries before it. We do know this: it was preceded by a long literary and intellectual activity, covering perhaps a thousand years or even more, and reaching back to the hymns of the Rig Veda itself, the oldest monument of Hindu literature. And the Gītā's sayings are rooted in those of this older literature. It was born out of the same intellectual environment. It quotes from older works several stanzas and parts of stanzas. There are few important expressions found in the Gītā which cannot be paralleled from more ancient works. Its originality consists mainly in a difference of emphasis, in a fuller development of some inherited themes, and in some significant omissions of themes which were found in its predecessors.

It is equally true, tho less important for our purposes, that the Bhagavad Gītā itself has had an enormous influence on later Hindu religious literature. It has even had some influence on European and American literature of the last century, during which it became known to the western world. To mention one instance: a verse found in the Gītā was imitated by Emerson in the first verse of his poem on "Brahma":

If the red slayer think he slays,
  Or if the slain think he is slain,
They know not well the subtle ways
  I keep, and pass, and turn again.

Compare Bhagavad Gītā ii. 19:

Who believes him a slayer,
  And who thinks him slain,
Both these understand not:
  He slays not, is not slain.

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

To be sure, this stanza is not original with the Gītā; it is quoted from the Kaṭha Upaniṣad. It is more likely, however, that Emerson got it from the Gītā than from the less well-known Upaniṣad text. But the later influence of the Gītā lies outside the scope of this volume. I shall content myself with setting forth the doctrines of the Gītā and their origins.

Especially close is the connection between the Bhagavad Gītā and the class of works called Upaniṣads. These are the earliest extensive treatises dealing with philosophical subjects in India. About a dozen of them, at least, are older than the Gītā, whose author knew and quoted several. The Gītā itself is indeed regarded as an Upaniṣad (its manuscripts regularly call it so in their colophons), and has quite as good a right to the title as many later works that are so called.[4] All the works properly called Upaniṣads have this in common, that they contain mainly speculations on some or all of the following topics: the nature of the universe, its origin, purpose, and guiding principle; the nature of man, his physical and his "hyper-physical" constitution, his duty, his destiny, and his relation to the rest of the universe, particularly to the guiding principle thereof, whether treated personally or impersonally. Now, these are precisely the questions with which the Bhagavad Gītā is concerned. The answers attempted vary greatly, not only in different Upaniṣads, but often in adjoining parts of the same Upaniṣad. This also is true of the Gītā, and is eminently characteristic of the literature to which it and the Upaniṣads belong. We sometimes hear of a "system" of the Upaniṣads. In my opinion there is no such thing. Nor is there a "system" of thought in the Bhagavad Gītā, in the sense of a unitary, logically coherent, and exclusive structure of metaphysics. He who looks for such a thing in any work of this period will be disappointed. Or, worse yet, he may be tempted to apply Procrustean methods, and by excisions or strained interpretations to force into a unified mold the sayings of a writer who never dreamed of the necessity or desirability of such unity. The Upaniṣads and the Bhagavad Gītā contain starts toward various *systems*; but none of them contains a single *system*, except possibly in the sense that one trend may be more prominent than its rivals in an individual work or part of a work. Still less can we speak of a single system as taught by the Upaniṣads as a whole.

The very notion of a philosophic "system" did not exist in India in the time of the early Upaniṣads and the Gītā. In later times the Hindus produced various systems of philosophy, which are fairly comparable with what we are accustomed to understand by that term, despite a clearly professed practical purpose which we moderns do not usually associate with

[4] The word *upaniṣad* may be translated "secret, mystic doctrine"; it is a title that is often claimed by all sorts of works, some of which hardly deserve to be called philosophical in any sense.

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

"philosophy." These systems all grew, at least in large measure, out of the older speculations of the Upaniṣads. Each later thinker chose out of the richness of Upaniṣadic thought such elements as pleased him, and constructed his logically coherent system on that basis. Thus, the Upaniṣads, broadly speaking, are the prime source of all the rival philosophies of later India. But they themselves are more modest. They do not claim to have succeeded in bringing under one rubric the absolute and complete truth about man and the universe. If they seem at times to make such claims, these statements are to be understood as tentative, not final; and often they are contradicted by an adjoining passage in which a very different viewpoint finds expression. This may seem to us naive. But I think it would be truer, as well as more charitable, to regard it as a sign of intellectual modesty, combined with an honest and burning eagerness for truth, conceived as leading to man's mastery over his environment.

Thus there grew up in Upaniṣadic circles not one but a group of attempts to solve the "riddles of the universe." The Bhagavad Gītā, we have seen, belongs to these circles intellectually, and many of its favorite themes are derived from the older Upaniṣads. More important than this is the fact that it shares with them the trait of intellectual fluidity or tentativeness to which I have just referred. Unlike many later Hindu philosophic works, which also derive from the Upaniṣads but which select and systematize their materials, the Gītā is content to present various rival formulas, admitting at least a provisional validity to them all. To be sure, it has its favorites. But we can usually find in its own text expressions which, in strict logic, contradict its most cardinal doctrines. From the non-logical, mystical viewpoint of the Gītā this is no particular disadvantage. Rationalistic logic simply does not apply to its problems.

In one other respect there is an important difference of fundamental attitude between the Bhagavad Gītā and most western philosophic thought. All Hindu philosophy has a practical aim. It seeks the truth, but not the truth for its own sake. It is truth as a means of human salvation that is its object. In other words, all Hindu philosophy is religious in basis. To the Hindu mind, "the truth shall make you free." Otherwise there is no virtue in it. This is quite as true of the later systems as of the early and less systematic speculations. To all of them knowledge is a means to an end. This attitude has its roots in a still more primitive belief, which appears clearly in the beginnings of Vedic philosophy and is still very much alive in the early Upaniṣads: the belief in the magic power of knowledge. To the early Hindus, as to mankind in early stages of development the world over, "knowledge is power" in a very direct sense. Whatever you know you control, directly, and by virtue of your knowledge. The primitive magician gets his neighbors, animal, human, or supernatural, into his power, by ac-

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

quiring knowledge of them. So the early Vedic thinkers sought to control the most fundamental and universal powers by *knowing* them. This belief the Hindus of classical times never quite outgrew. The Sanskrit word *vidyā*, "knowledge," means also "magic." Let westerners not be scornful of this. Down to quite modern times the same idea prevailed in Europe. In Shakespeare's *Tempest*, Prospero the scholar proves his learning by feats of magic; and in Robert Greene's play, *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*, Roger Bacon, the greatest of medieval English scholars, is represented as a mighty magician, and a contest of scholarship between him and a rival German scholar resolves itself into a mere test of their powers in necromancy. In short, knowledge meant primarily magic power, to the popular mind of that day. Even tho Greene doubtless intended his play as a farce, and did not take this notion seriously, still he would not have parodied the belief if it had not flourished in his time. As in Europe, so in India, the more advanced thinkers early began to keep their speculations free from magic, in its cruder forms. Even such a comparatively early work as the Bhagavad Gītā has no traces of the magical use of knowledge for the attainment of trivial, worldly ends, tho many such traces are still found in the Upaniṣads, its immediate predecessors. To this extent it marks an advance over them, and stands on essentially the same footing with the best of the later systematic philosophies. But the Bhagavad Gītā and the later systems agree with the early Upaniṣadic thinkers in their practical attitude towards speculation. They all seek the truth, not because of its abstract interest, but because in some sense or other they think that a realization of the truth about man's place in the universe and his destiny will solve all man's problems; free him from all the troubles of life; in short, bring him to the *summum bonum*, whatever they conceive that to be. Just as different thinkers differ as to what that truth is, so they also differ in their definitions of salvation or of the *summum bonum*, and of the best practical means of attaining it. Indeed, as we have seen, the early thinkers, including the author of the Gītā, frequently differ with themselves on such points. But they all agree in this fundamental attitude towards the objects of speculation. They are primarily religious rather than philosophical. And the historic origin of their attitude, in primitive notions about the magic power of knowledge, has left a trace which I think was never fully effaced, altho it was undoubtedly transcended and transfigured.

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

CHAPTER II

The Origins of Hindu Speculation

The records of Hindu religious thought, as of Hindu literature in general, begin with the Rig Veda. This is a collection consisting mostly of hymns of praise and prayer to a group of deities who are primarily personified powers of nature — sun, fire, wind, sky, and the like — with the addition of some gods whose original nature is obscure. The religion represented by the Rig Veda, however, is by no means a simple or primitive nature-worship. Before the dawn of history it had developed into a ritualistic cult, a complicated system of sacrifices, the performance of which was the class privilege of a guild of priests. In the hands of this priestly class the sacrificial cult became more and more elaborate, and occupied more and more the center of the stage. At first merely a means of gratification and propitiation of the gods, the sacrifice gradually became an end in itself, and finally, in the period succeeding the hymns of the Rig Veda, the gods became supernumeraries. The now all-important sacrifices no longer persuaded, but compelled them to do what the sacrificer desired; or else, at times, the sacrifice produced the desired result immediately, without any participation whatsoever on the part of the gods. The gods are even spoken of themselves as offering sacrifices; and it is said that they owe their divine position, or their very existence, to the sacrifice. This extreme glorification of the ritual performance appears in the period of the Brāhmaṇas, theological textbooks whose purpose is to expound the mystic meaning of the various rites. They are later in date than the Rig-Vedic hymns; and their religion, a pure magical ritualism, is the apotheosis, or the *reductio ad absurdum*, of the ritualistic nature-worship of the hymns.

Even in Rig-Vedic times the priestly ritual was so elaborate, and so expensive, that in the nature of things only rich men, mainly princes, could engage in it. It was therefore not only a hieratic but an aristocratic cult. The real religion of the great mass of the people was different. We find it portrayed best in the Atharva Veda. This is a collection of hymns, or rather magic charms, intended to accompany a mass of simpler rites and ceremonies which were not connected with the hieratic cult of the Rig Veda. Almost every conceivable human need and aspiration is represented by these popular performances. Their religious basis may be described as primitive animism, and their method of operation as simple magic. That is, they regard all creatures, things, powers, and even abstract principles, as volitional potencies or "spirits," or as animated by "spirits," which they seek

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

to control by incantations and magic rites. They know also the higher gods of the Rig-Vedic pantheon, and likewise other gods which perhaps belonged at the start to aboriginal, non-"Aryan" tribes ("Aryan" is the name which the Vedic Hindus apply to themselves). But they invoke these gods after the manner of magic-mongers, much as medieval European incantations invoke the persons of the Trinity and Christian saints in connection with magic practices to heal a broken bone or to bring rain for the crops.

Later Hindu thought developed primarily out of the hieratic, Rig-Vedic religion; but it contains also quite a dash of lower, more popular beliefs. The separation of the two elements is by no means always easy. The truth seems to be that the speculations out of which the later forms of thought developed were carried on mainly by priests, adherents of the hieratic ritual religion. Almost all the intellectual leaders of the community belonged to the priestly class. But they were naturally — almost inevitably — influenced by the popular religion which surrounded them. Indeed, there was no opposition between the two types of religion, nor such a cleavage as our description may suggest. The followers of the hieratic cult also engaged in the practices that belonged to the more popular religion. This accounts for the constant infiltration from the "lower" sphere into the "higher," which we see going on at all periods. At times it is hard to decide whether a given new development is due to the intrusion of popular beliefs, or to internal evolution within the sphere of the priestly religion itself.

For we can clearly see the growth of certain new views within the Rig Veda itself. Out of the older ritualistic nature-worship, with its indefinite plurality of gods, arises in many Rig-Vedic hymns a new attitude, a sort of mitigated polytheism, to which has been given the name of *henotheism*. By this is meant a religious point of view which, when dealing for the moment with any particular god, seems to feel it as an insult to his dignity to admit the competition of other deities. And so, either the particular god of the moment is made to absorb all the others, who are declared to be manifestations of him; or else, he is given attributes which in strict logic could only be given to a sole monotheistic deity. Thus various Vedic gods are each at different times declared to be the creator, preserver, and animator of the universe, the sole ruler of all creatures, human and divine, and so on. Such hymns, considered separately, seem clearly to imply monotheism; but all that they really imply is a ritualistic henotheism. As each god comes upon the stage in the procession of rites, he is impartially granted this increasingly extravagant praise, until everything that could be said of all the gods collectively is said of each of them in turn, individually. We see that Vedic henotheism is rooted in the hieratic ritual, without which it perhaps would hardly have developed.

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

But it was not long before some advanced thinkers saw that such things as the creation of the world and the rulership over it could really be predicated only of one Personality. The question then arose, how to name and define that One? We might have expected that some one of the old gods would be erected into a truly monotheistic deity. But, perhaps because none of them seemed sufficiently superior to his fellows, perhaps for some other reason, this was not done. Instead, in a few late hymns of the Rig Veda we find various tentative efforts to establish a new deity in this supreme position. Different names are given to him: "the Lord of Creatures" (Prajāpati), "the All-maker" (Viśvakarman), and the like. As these names show, the new figure is rather abstract, and no longer ritualistic. Yet it is still personal. It is a *God* who creates, supports, and rules the world; a kind of Yahweh or Allah; not an impersonal First Cause. It is an attempt at monotheism, not yet monism.

These starts toward monotheism remained abortive, in the sense that they did not, at least directly, result in the establishment of a monotheistic religion comparable to that of the Hebrew people. Some centuries were to pass before such religions gained any strong foothold in India; and the connection between them and these early suggestions is remote and tenuous. The later religions owe their strength largely to other elements of more popular origin. Yet sporadic and more or less tentative suggestions of the sort continued to be made.

More striking, and more significant for the later development of Hindu philosophy, is a movement towards *monism* which appears, along with the monotheistic movement, even in the Rig Veda itself, tho only tentatively and very rarely. One or two Rig-Vedic hymns attempt to formulate the One in strictly impersonal, non-theistic terms. Among these I must mention the one hundred and twenty-ninth hymn of the tenth book of the Rig Veda, which to my mind is a very remarkable production, considering its time and place. This "hymn" (for so we can hardly help calling it, since it is found in the "hymn-book" of the Rig Veda) also seeks to explain the universe as evolving out of One; but its One is no longer a god. It knows no Yahweh or Allah, any more than the ritualistic Indra or Varuṇa. It definitely brushes aside all gods, not indeed denying their existence, but declaring that they are all of late and secondary origin; they know nothing of the beginnings of things. The First Principle of this hymn is "That One" (*tad ekam*). It is of neuter gender, as it were lest some theologian should get hold of it and insist on falling down and worshiping it. It is not only impersonal and non-theistic, but absolutely uncharacterizable and indescribable, without qualities or attributes, even negative ones. It was "neither existent nor non-existent." To seek to know it is hopeless; in the last two verses of the hymn (there are only seven in all) the author relapses into a negative style of ex-

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

pression which remains characteristic of Hindu higher thought in certain moods. While the later Upaniṣads often try to describe the One all-inclusively, by saying that it is *everything*, that it contains all possible and conceivable characteristics; still in some of their deepest moments they too prefer the negative statement *neti, neti*[1] — "No, no." To apply to it any description is to limit and bound that which is limitless and boundless. It cannot be described; it cannot be known.

But the ancient Hindu thinkers could never resign themselves to this negation. Even if they sometimes recognized that they could not, in the nature of things, know the Unknowable, still their restless speculation kept returning to the struggle again and again, from ever varied points of attack. In the Rig Veda itself, in one of its latest hymns (10.90), appears the first trace of a strain of monistic thought which is of the greatest importance for later Hindu philosophy: the universe is treated as parallel in nature to the human personality. The First Principle in this hymn is called Puruṣa, that is, "Man" or "Person." From the several parts of this cosmic Person are derived, by a still rather crude process of evolution, all existing things. The significance of this lies in its anticipation of the Upaniṣadic view of the identity of the human soul (later called *ātman*, literally "self," as a rule) with the universal principle.

Other, later Vedic texts, especially the Atharva Veda, also contain speculative materials. They are extremely varied in character; they testify to the restlessness and tentativeness which we have seen as a characteristic of all early Hindu thought. At times they seem monotheistic in tendency. The "Lord of Creatures," Prajāpati, of the Rig Veda, appears again and again, as a kind of demiurge; and other names are invented for the same or a similar figure, such as the "Establisher," Dhātar, or the "Arranger," Vidhātar, or "He that is in the Highest," Parameṣṭhin. But never does such a figure attain anything like the definite dignity which we associate with a genuine monotheistic deity. And more often the interest centers around less personal, more abstract entities, either physical or metaphysical, or more or less both at once. The sun, especially under the mystic name of Rohita, "the Ruddy One," enjoys a momentary glory in several Atharva-Vedic charms, which invest him with the functions of a cosmic principle. Or the world is developed out of water; we are reminded of Thales, the first of the Greek philosophers. The wind, regarded as the most subtle of physical elements and as the "life-breath" (*prāṇa*) of the universe, plays at times a like role, and by being compared with man's life-breath it contributes to the development of the cosmic "Person" (Puruṣa) of the Rig Veda into the later Ātman or Soul (of man) as the Supreme One. The word *ātman*

[1] Bṛhad Āraṇyaka Upaniṣad 3.9.26, and in other places.

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

itself seems actually to be used in this way in one or two late verses of the Atharva Veda.[2] The power of Time (*kāla*), or of Desire (*kāma*) — a sort of cosmic Will, reminding us of Schopenhauer — is elsewhere treated as the force behind the evolution of the universe. Or, still more abstractly, the world-all is derived from a hardly defined "Support," that is, a "Fundamental Principle" (*skambha*), on which everything rests. These and other shadowy figures flit across the stage of later Vedic speculation. Individually, few of them have enough definiteness or importance to merit much attention. But in the mass they are of the greatest value for one who would follow the development of Hindu speculation as a whole.

The real underlying motive and rationale of all this "monism," this seeking for a single principle in the universe, cannot be understood without reference to the principle of *identification* as it appears in early Vedic texts; most clearly in the Brāhmaṇas (above, p. 9). A very striking feature of these works is their passion for identification of one thing with another, on the slenderest possible basis; indeed, often on no basis at all that we can discover. The purpose was strictly practical; more specifically, magical. It was to get results by setting cosmic forces in motion. To this end a cosmic force was said to "be" this or that other thing, which other thing we can control. "By grasping or controlling one of the two identified entities, the possessor of the mystic knowledge as to their identity has power over the other, which is in fact no other"[3] but really the same. For instance, "the cow is breath"; I control a cow, therefore I control breath, my own life-breath, or some one else's. That is the only reason for the fantastic identification. We want to control, let us say, the breath of life, in ourselves or some one else (perhaps an enemy): so we earnestly and insistently identify it with something that we *can* control, and the trick is turned. It required only a slight extension of this to arrive at the notion that if we can only "know" the one principle of the whole universe, the one which is to be *identified* with "all," with every thing that is, we shall then control all, and be able to deal with the universe as we please.[4] So all Vedic speculation is eminently practical. As we said above, metaphysical truth *per se* and for its own sake is not its object. Earnest and often profound tho these thinkers are, they never lose sight for long of their practical aim, which is to control, by virtue of their superior knowledge, the cosmic forces which they study. That is why so many of their speculations are imbedded in the Atharva Veda, a book of magic spells, which to our minds would seem the most inappropriate place possible.

[2] 10.8.43, 44.

[3] H. Oldenberg, *Vorwissenschaftliche Wissenschaft*, Göttingen, 1919, p. 110.

[4] See my article, "The Upaniṣads, what do they seek and why?" *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 49.97 ff.

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

It might seem to follow from this that the speculative activity of this period belonged to the popular sphere represented by the religion of the Atharva Veda, more than to the ritualistic cult that was the heir of the Rig Veda. But I think there is evidence to the contrary, However appropriate to the spirit of the popular religion it seemed in some respects, this activity was carried on mainly by the priests of the hieratic ritual. And this fact, which for various reasons seems to me indubitable, finds a striking concrete expression in a philosophic term developed in this period which deserves special consideration.

Among all the varied formulations of the First and Supreme Principle, none recurs more constantly thruout the later Vedic texts than the *brahman*. The oldest meaning of this word seems to be "holy knowledge," "sacred utterance," or (what to primitive man is the same thing) its concrete expression, "hymn" or "incantation." It is applied both to the ritual hymns of the Rig Veda and to the magic charms of the Atharva Veda. Any holy, mystic utterance is *brahman*. This is the regular, if not the exclusive, meaning which the word has in the Rig Veda. But from the point of view of those times, this definition implies far more than it would suggest to our minds. The spoken word had a mysterious, supernatural power; it contained within itself the essence of the thing denoted. To "know the *name*" of anything was to control the thing. The *word* means wisdom, knowledge; and knowledge, as we have seen, was (magic) power. So *brahman*, the "holy word," soon came to mean the mystic power inherent in the holy word.

But to the later Vedic ritualists, this holy word was the direct expression and embodiment of the ritual religion, and as such a cosmic power of the first magnitude. The ritual religion, and hence its verbal expression, the *brahman*, was omnipotent; it was "all." All human desires and aspirations were accessible to him who mastered it. All other cosmic forces, even the greatest of natural and supernatural powers, were dependent upon it. The gods themselves, originally the beneficiaries of the cult, became its helpless mechanical agents, or were left out of account altogether as useless middlemen. The cult was the direct controlling force of the universe. And the *brahman* was the spirit, the expression, of the cult; nay, it *was* the cult, mystically speaking, because the word and the thing were one; he who knew the word, knew and controlled the thing. Therefore, he who knew the *brahman* knew and controlled the whole universe. It is no wonder, then, that in the later Vedic texts (not yet in the Rig Veda) we find the *brahman* frequently mentioned as the primal principle [5] and as the ruling and guiding spirit of the universe. It is a thoroly ritualistic notion, inconceivable ex-

[5] "There is nothing more ancient or higher than this *brahman*," Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa, 10.3.5.11.

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

cept as an outgrowth of the theories of the ritualistic cult, but very simple and as it were self-evident from the point of view of the ritualists. The overwhelming prominence and importance of the *brahman* in later Vedic speculation seems, therefore, a striking proof of the fact that this speculation was at least in large part a product of ritualistic, priestly circles.

Not content with attempts to identify the One, the Vedic thinkers also try to define His, or Its, relation to the empiric world. Here again their suggestions are many and varied. Often the One is a sort of demiurge, a Creator, Father, First Cause. Such theistic expressions may be used of impersonal monistic names for the One as well as of more personal, quasi-monotheistic ones. The One is compared to a carpenter or a smith; he joins or smelts the world into being. Or his act is like an act of generation; he begets all beings. Still more interestingly, his creative activity is compared to a sacrifice, a ritual performance, or to prayer, or religious fervor (*dhī*, *tapas*). This obviously ritualistic imagery appears even in the Rig Veda itself, in several of its philosophic hymns. In the Puruṣa hymn, already referred to, the universe is derived from the sacrifice of the cosmic Person, the Puruṣa; the figure is of the dismemberment of a sacrificial animal; from each of the members of the cosmic Puruṣa evolved a part of the existing world. The performers of this cosmogonic sacrifice are "the gods," — inconsistently, of course, for the gods have already been declared to be secondary to the Puruṣa, who transcends all existing things. In later Vedic times we repeatedly meet with such ritualistic expressions. They confirm our feeling that we are dealing with priests.

We see from what has just been said of the Puruṣa hymn that the One — here the Puruṣa, the cosmic "Person" or "man" — may be regarded as the material source (*causa materialis*) as well as the creator (*causa efficiens*) of the world. All evolves out of it, or is a part of it; but frequently, as in the Puruṣa hymn, it is *more* than all empiric existence; it transcends all things, which form, or derive from, but a part of it. Again, it is often spoken of as the ruler, controller, or lord of all. Or, it is the foundation, fundament, upon which all is based, which supports all. Still more significant are passages which speak of the One as subtly pervading all, as air or ether or space (*ākāśa*) pervades the physical universe, and animating all, as the breath of life (*prāṇa*) is regarded as both pervading and animating the human body.

Such expressions as this last lead to a modification, with mitigation of the crudity, of the above-noted parallelism between man, the microcosm, and the universe, the macrocosm, which as we have seen dates from late Rig-Vedic times. In the Puruṣa hymn of the Rig Veda we find a crude evolution of various parts of the physical universe from the parts of the physical body of the cosmic "Man." But in the later Vedic texts the feeling grows that man's nature is not accounted for by dissecting his physical body —

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

and, correspondingly, that there must be something more in the universe than the sum total of its physical elements. What is that "something more" in man? Is it the "life-breath" or "life-breaths" (*prāṇa*), which seem to be in and thru various parts of the human body and to be the principle of man's life (since they leave the body at death)? So many Vedic thinkers believed. What, then, is the corresponding "life-breath" of the universe? Obviously the wind, say some. Others think of it as the *ākāśa*, "ether," or "space." But even these presently seem too physical, too material. On the human side, too, it begins to be evident that the "life-breath," like its cosmic counterpart the wind, is in reality physical. Surely the essential Man must be something else. What then? Flittingly, here and there, it is suggested that it may be man's "desire" or "will" (*kāma*), or his "mind" (*manas*), or something else of a more or less "psychological" nature. But already in the Atharva Veda, and with increasing frequency later, we find as an expression for the real, essential part of Man the word *ātman* used. *Ātman* means simply "self"; it is used familiarly as a reflexive pronoun, like the German *sich*. One could hardly get a more abstract term for that which is left when everything unessential is deducted from man, and which is at the same time to be considered the principle of his life, the living soul that pervades his being. And, carrying on the parallelism, we presently find mention of the *ātman*, self or soul, of the universe. The texts do not content themselves with that; they continue to speculate as to what that "soul" of the universe is. But these speculations tend to become more and more remote from purely physical elements. Increasing partiality is shown for such metaphysical expressions as "the existent," or "that which is" (*sat*),[6] or again "the non-existent" (*asat*); in the Rig-Vedic hymn 10.129 we were told that in the beginning there was "neither existent nor non-existent," but later we find both "the existent" and "the non-existent" used as expressions for the first principle. But perhaps the favorite formula in later Vedic times for the soul of the universe is the originally ritualistic one of the *brahman*.

If we remember the Brāhmaṇa principle of identification by mystic knowledge for purposes of magical control, set forth above, we shall now be able to understand the standard answer given in the Upaniṣads to the question "With what shall we identify the one thing, by knowing which all is known?" That answer is: "With the soul, the *ātman*, of man." Obviously; for whether it be called *Brahman*, or the existent, or what-not, the

[6] Compare the Greek τὸ ὄν or τὸ ὄντως ὄν, "that which (really) is," and, for a less exact parallel, the Kantian *Ding an sich*. But the "existent," the "being," that which (really) is, whether in man or in the universe, was probably not so abstract or metaphysical as we feel the corresponding western phrases. The Sanskrit word must be understood from the magical standpoint which I have described.

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

One is naturally the essential self or "soul," *ātman*, of the universe. If it is *ātman*, and my soul, my real self, is also *ātman*, then is not the mystic identification ready-made? By "knowing" the one I may "know" — *and control* — the other. And surely there is nothing which I control more obviously and perfectly than my own "self." If now I "know" that the Brahman, which is the *ātman* of the universe, is my own *ātman*, then not only do I control the fundamental principle of the universe, because knowledge is magic power; but even more than that, I *am* the fundamental principle of the universe, by mystic identification. For this double reason, there is nothing beyond my grasp. Thus the knowledge of the One which is All, and its identification with the human soul, is a short-cut to the satisfaction of all desires, the freedom from all fear and danger and sorrow.

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

CHAPTER III

The Upaniṣads, and the Fundamental Doctrines of Later Hindu Thought

The Upaniṣads are the earliest Hindu treatises, other than single hymns or brief passages, which deal with philosophic subjects. They are formally parts of the Veda,[1] — the last offshoots of Vedic literature. The dry bones of the Vedic ritual cult rattle about in them in quite a noisy fashion at times, and seriously strain our patience and our charity. But they also contain the apotheosis, the New Testament, of Vedic philosophy. In them the struggling speculations which we have briefly sketched in the last chapter reach their highest development. They do not, be it noted, receive any final, systematic codification. That came much later. They are still tentative, fluid, and, one may fairly say, unstable; they are frequently inconsistent with each other and with themselves. They contain no system, but starts toward various different systems. Later Hindu thought utilized these starts and developed them into the various systematic philosophies of later times — Sāṃkhya, Vedānta, and the rest. In fact, there are few important terms of later Hindu philosophical or religious thought which are not at least foreshadowed in the Upaniṣads. They are the connecting link between the Veda and later Hinduism; the last word of the one, the prime source of the other.

In this chapter, I wish to deal with the Upaniṣads mostly from the latter point of view: to show how they reveal the early stages of the fundamental postulates of later Hindu thought. While the views reproduced in this chapter are all found in the early Upaniṣads (except where the contrary is stated), we also find in them expressions of quite different views, which approach much more closely the older Vedic speculations. The relation of the Upaniṣads to those earlier speculations may, in general, be described by saying that while the Upaniṣads carry their inquiries along essentially the same lines, and are actuated by the same basic belief in the mystic, magic power of knowledge, their interests become increasingly anthropocentric and less cosmo-physical or ritualistic. Explanations of the cosmic absolute in purely physical terms, and speculations about the esoteric meaning of ritual entities, while they still occur, become less prominent; speculations on the nature and fate of man, and explanations of the universe in human or quasi-human terms, increase in frequency. Thus one of the most striking

[1] At least the older and more genuine ones are that; we may ignore for our present purpose the numerous late and secondary works which call themselves Upaniṣads.

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

dogmas in the Upaniṣads is that the human soul or self *is* the Absolute ("that art thou";[2] "I am Brahman";[3] "it [the universal Brahman] is thy self, that is within everything";[4] "that which rests in all things and is distinct from all things, which all things know not, of which all things are the body [that is, the material representation or form], which controls all things within, that is thy self [*ātman*], the immortal Inner Controller").[5] All that is outside of this Self is at times viewed as created by, or emitted from, It (as in dreams the Self seems to create a dream-world and to live in it).[6] At other times the sharp line drawn between the Self and material nature, that is all that is not Self, is made to preclude any genetic relation between the two.[7]

The reason for the identification of the human soul with the principle of the universe was suggested in the last chapter, but I shall summarize it once more in words which I have used elsewhere.[8] "The Upaniṣads seek to know the real truth about the universe, not for its own sake; not for the mere joy of knowledge; not as an abstract speculation; but simply because they conceive such knowledge as a short-cut to the control of every cosmic power. The possessor of such knowledge will be in a position to satisfy his any desire. He will be free from old age and death, from danger and sorrow, from all the ills that flesh is heir to. By knowledge of the One that is All, and by mystically identifying his own self with that One which is All, he has, like that One, the All in his control. Knowledge, true esoteric knowledge, is the magic key to omnipotence, absolute power. By it one becomes autonomous. Vedic philosophy . . . is simply an attempt to gain at one stroke all possible human ends, by *knowing*, once for all, the essential truth of the entire cosmos. If all can be known at once, and especially if it can be mystically identified with one's own 'soul,' then all will be controlled, and there will be no need of half-way measures; no need of attempting by magic

[2] Chāndogya Upaniṣad 6.8.7, etc.

[3] Bṛhad Āraṇyaka Upaniṣad 1.4.10, etc.

[4] *Ibid.*, 3.4.1.

[5] *Ibid.*, 3.7.15.

[6] *Ibid.*, 4.3.10. According to several Upaniṣad passages the soul performs this creative act by a sort of mystic, quasi-magic power, sometimes called *māyā*, that is, "artifice"; it is a word sometimes applied to sorcery, and to tricks and stratagems of various kinds. The Bhagavad Gītā similarly speaks of the Deity as appearing in material nature by His *māyā*, His mystic power. This does not mean (in my opinion; some scholars take the contrary view) that the world outside of the self is illusory, without real existence, as the later Vedānta philosophy maintains; *māyā*, I think, is not used in the Vedāntic sense of "world-illusion" until many centuries later.

[7] Thus foreshadowing the later dualistic systems, such as classical Sāṃkhya and Yoga, which recognize matter and soul as two eternal and eternally independent principles — a doctrine which is familiarly accepted in the Bhagavad Gītā.

[8] *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 49.118.

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

to gain this or that special desideratum [which minor and special desiderata are nevertheless constantly sought in the Upaniṣads, by a natural inconsistency which only helps to prove my point]. . . . The Brahman, as an expression for the supreme power of the universe, is simply this same mystic knowledge. . . ."

In view of this, it is not strange that the attention of the Upaniṣadic thinkers is more and more centered upon the human soul. Other things are important as they are related to it. And — while its origin and past history remain objects of interest — we find an increasing amount of attention paid to its future fate. The practical purpose of speculation reasserts itself emphatically in the question, how can man control his own destiny? What is man's *summum bonum*, and how shall he attain it? It is out of such questions and the answers to them that the basic postulates of later Hindu thought develop.

In early Vedic times the objects of human desire are the ordinary ones which natural man seeks the world over: wealth, pleasures, power over his fellows, long life, and offspring; and finally, since death puts an end to the enjoyment of all these, immortality. Immortality, however, can only be hoped for in a future existence, since all life on this earth is seen to end in death. So the Vedic poets hope for some sort of heavenly and eternal life after death. But presently they begin to be uneasy lest perchance death might interfere with that future life, also. The fear of this "re-death" becomes, in what we may call the Middle Vedic period (the Brāhmaṇas), a very prominent feature. Combined with this is the growing belief in the imperishability of the *ātman*, the Self or Soul, the essential part of the living being. These two views are not mutually contradictory. Death remains, as a very disagreeable experience — no less disagreeable if it must be undergone more than once — even tho it does not destroy the Soul but only brings it over into a new existence. What pleasure can man take in wealth, power, and offspring, if this sword of Damocles is constantly hanging over him, threatening to deprive him of all, and to launch him upon some new and untried existence? Moreover, that future existence may be no better than the present one. Possibly under the influence of popular animism, which sees "souls" similar to the human soul in all parts of nature, the future life is brought down from heaven to this earth. And so, in the early Upaniṣads, we find quite definite statements of the theory of rebirth or transmigration, which was to remain thru all future time an axiom to practically all Hindus. According to this, the Soul is subject to an indefinite series of existences, in various material forms or "bodies," either in this world or in various imaginary worlds. The Bhagavad Gītā expresses this universal Hindu belief in the form of two similes. It says that one existence follows another just as different stages of life — childhood, young manhood,

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

and old age — follow one another in this life.[9] Or again, just as one lays off old garments and dons new ones, so the Soul lays off an old, worn-out body and puts on a new one.[10] One of the oldest Upaniṣads uses the simile of a grass-leech, which crawls to the end of a blade of grass and then "gathers itself together" to pass over to another blade of grass; so the Soul at death "gathers itself together" and passes over to a new existence.[11]

The Upaniṣads also begin to combine with this doctrine of an indefinite series of reincarnations the old belief in retribution for good and evil deeds in a life after death; a belief which prevailed among the people of Vedic India, as all over the world. With the transfer of the future life from a mythical other world to this earth, and with the extension or multiplication of it to an indefinite series of future lives more or less like the present life, the way was prepared for the characteristically Hindu doctrine of "karma" (*karman*) or "deed." This doctrine, which is also axiomatic to the Hindus, teaches that the state of each existence of each individual is absolutely conditioned and determined by that individual's morality in previous existences. A man is exactly what he has made himself and what he therefore deserves to be. An early Upaniṣad says: "Just as (the Soul) is (in this life) of this or that sort; just as it acts, just as it operates, even so precisely it becomes (in the next life). If it acts well it becomes good; if it acts ill it becomes evil. As a result of right action it becomes what is good; as a result of evil action it becomes what is evil."[12] In short, the law of the conservation of energy is rigidly applied to the moral world. Every action, whether good or bad, must have its result for the doer. If in the present life a man is on the whole good, his next existence is better by just so much as his good deeds have outweighed his evil deeds. He becomes a great and noble man, or a king, or perhaps a god (the gods, like men, are subject to the law of transmigration). Conversely, a wicked man is reborn as a person of low position, or as an animal, or, in cases of exceptional depravity, he may fall to existence in hell. And all this is not carried out by decree of some omnipotent and sternly just Power. It is a natural law. It operates of itself just as much as the law of gravitation. It is therefore wholly dispassionate, neither merciful nor vindictive. It is absolutely inescapable; but at the same time it never cuts off hope. A man is what he has made himself; but by that same token he may make himself what he will. The soul tormented in the lowest hell may raise himself in time to the highest heaven, simply by doing right. Perfect justice is made the basic law of the universe. It is a principle of great moral grandeur and perfection.

[9] ii. 13.
[10] ii. 22.
[11] Bṛhad Āraṇyaka Upaniṣad, 4.4.3.
[12] *Ibid.*, 4.4.5.

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

The Upaniṣads go farther than this in anticipating later Hindu views of the Soul's progress. One of the earliest of them contains this passage: "This Spirit of Man consists simply of *desire*. As is his desire, so is his resolve; as is his resolve, so is the deed (*karman*) that he does; as is the deed that he does, so is that (fate) which he attains unto." [13] The root of action, and so the determining cause of man's future fate, is his "desire." It follows that if man's desires can be properly regulated, he can be led to his true goal. This remains a fundamental tenet of later Hinduism.

It might seem that the glorification of the Soul as the center of the universe should be a comforting and inspiring thought. And, indeed, the Upaniṣads and later Hindu works describe the perfections of the Soul in inspiring and even ecstatic terms. But the practical effect of all this upon the Hindu attitude towards our present life was just the opposite. It only served to emphasize the contrast between the Soul and all that is not Soul, that is, all material or empiric existence. "Whatever is other than That (the Soul) is evil," says an early Upaniṣad.[14] Soon this crystallizes into a definitely and thoroly pessimistic view of life. All existence, in the ordinary empiric sense, is inherently worthless and base and evil. Pleasures are both transitory and illusory. Death is not only an evil in itself, which threatens us at every moment, but also it leads only to further existence, that is, to further misery. True joy and peace can only be found in the Self.

Accordingly, the perfected man is he "*whose desire is the Soul*, whose desire is satisfied, who has no desire" (other than the Soul; that is, who is free from ordinary, worldly desires),[15] who "is beyond desire, has dispensed with evil, knows no fear, is free from sorrow." [16] As long as a man is affected by desire (other than the desire for the Soul's perfection, which, as just indicated, is the same as having *no* desire), this leads him to "resolve" and to "action," which must have its fruit in continued material existence; and all material existence is evil.

The estate of this perfected man is most commonly described as attainment of, going to, or union with the One — which may be called Brahman, or the Ātman (the Self or Soul), or some synonym. It is not non-existence, according to the Upaniṣads; for the soul is immortal, and cannot cease to be. It is sometimes even declared to be a conscious state; but this is immediately qualified by saying that tho the soul still has the faculties of seeing, knowing, and so on, there is no object for these faculties to act upon, so that after all

[13] *Ibid.*, 4.4.5.

[14] *Ibid.*, 3.4.2.

[15] These include, typically, sensual desires of all kinds, and desire for continued existence in rebirths.

[16] Bṛhad Āraṇyaka Upaniṣad, 4.4.6; 4.3.22.

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

it is to all intents and purposes a state of unconsciousness.[17] As the soul is one with the universal subject, than which there is then no other, there can be no object, and hence no activity of the senses or mental faculties. So at other times the texts plainly say "there is no consciousness after death (for the perfected soul)." [18] They treat it as similar to the state of deep and dreamless sleep, which is indeed at times said to be a temporary union with the One, and so a foretaste of that perfected condition.[19] It is natural that such a state should be associated with bliss; for while the waking man has no recollection of consciousness or anything else as having existed in sound sleep, still he awakes from it feeling refreshed and perhaps with a vague impression of having been in some sort of remote and happy state. At any rate, the Upaniṣads leave no doubt that there is in this union with the One a total cessation of desires, of evil, of sorrow — in short, of ordinary, empiric, worldly existence, which is characterized by desires, evil, and sorrow. But not content with that, they describe it as a state of pure and ecstatic bliss, infinitely surpassing all human joys, indeed far exceeding the power of man to conceive it.[20]

Later Hindu religions and philosophies call this state by the well-known name *nirvāṇa*. This means "extinction," originally of a fire or flame; then of the flames of desire, as the cause of continued rebirth. Some later sects, such as the Buddhists, have been represented as meaning by it also literal extinction of life, of existence in any form; but with more than doubtful propriety. At any rate, even in Buddhist texts *nirvāṇa* is described as a state of blissful ecstasy. It makes no difference if, with the later Sāṃkhya, one denies the world-soul and merely regards the perfected individual souls as existing separately, independent of each other and of matter; still the same descriptions are used. All the later variations in metaphysical theory (some of them adumbrated in the Upaniṣads) make no difference in the view of the perfected state as a kind of pure and — so to speak — unconscious consciousness, and transcendent bliss. The Bhagavad Gītā uses the word *nirvāṇa* several times, generally in the compound *brahmanirvāṇa*, "extinction in Brahman," or "the extinction which is Brahman." More commonly it uses vaguer terms to describe the goal which means salvation — such expressions as "perfection," "the highest goal," "the supreme state" or "My (God's) estate." Or it simply says "he attains Me (God)," or "he attains Brahman"; that is, the perfected man becomes united with God or with Brahman. Details as to the nature of that state are wholly wanting in the Gītā, if we except such vague expressions as "that highest station of Mine, to which having gone one does not return, is not illumined by sun or moon or fire" [21] — implying that it shines by its own light. We are not told how

[17] *Ibid.*, 4.5.15; 4.3.23 ff.
[18] *Ibid.*, 4.5.13.
[19] *Ibid.*, 4.3.19 ff.
[20] *Ibid.*, 4.3.32, 33.
[21] 15.6.

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

the Gītā regarded the state of a man who had gained this position. All that seems clear is that it was regarded as some sort of real existence, not as total and absolute annihilation.

The way to attain this state of perfection, as to attain anything else, is, according to the usual Upaniṣad doctrine, by true knowledge. Knowledge is the magic talisman that opens all doors. He who knows anything, controls it; and so, he who knows the supreme truth thereby becomes master of it, and gains the highest state. "He who knows that supreme Brahman, unto Brahman he goes."[22] Similar expressions appear constantly thruout the whole Upaniṣad literature. This comes as near as anything to being a universal doctrine of the Upaniṣads. It is furthermore a doctrine which is of fundamental importance in all later Hindu thought. All the later systems make it their prime business to point the way to human salvation; and one may say in general that their methods are primarily and originally intellectual, or, perhaps better, intuitive. They teach that man shall be saved thru the realization of the supreme truth. In their formulations of that truth they differ, of course, among themselves; that is the reason for the plurality of systems. But they usually state, or at least imply, the omnipotence of knowledge; and conversely they usually emphasize the fact that ignorance (*avidyā*) is the root of evil. Characteristic of them all is the Buddhist formula, which says that ignorance is the cause of desire; desire leads to action; and action must have its fruit, as we have seen, in continued existence, all of which is evil.

Even *good* deeds are still deeds, and must have their fruit, according to the doctrine of "karma." And to attain the *summum bonum* man must get rid of all deeds, of all karma. Therefore, while most if not all Hindu systems teach a practical morality, they also teach that no degree of morality, however perfect, can lead to final salvation. In this, too, they are anticipated by the Upaniṣads. The perfect soul is "beyond good and evil."[23] Neither good nor evil can affect him. At times the Upaniṣads seem even to say or imply that when a man has attained enlightenment, he can do what he likes without fear of results. This somewhat dangerous doctrine is, however, not typical, and is probably to be regarded only as a strained and exaggerated manner of saying that the truly enlightened soul cannot, in the very nature of things, do an evil deed. If he could, he would not be truly enlightened; for "he who has not ceased from evil conduct cannot attain Him (the Ātman) by intelligence."[24] This is similar to the Socratic notion that the truly wise man must inevitably be virtuous. The difference is that the Upaniṣads regard even virtue, as well as vice, as transcended by perfect

[22] Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad, 3.2.9; Kauṣītaki Upaniṣad, 1. 4.
[23] Kauṣītaki Upaniṣad, 1.4; compare Bṛhad Āraṇyaka Upaniṣad, 4.3.22, etc.
[24] Kaṭha Upaniṣad, 2.24.

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

knowledge; the possessor thereof passes beyond both, and rises to a plane on which moral terms simply have no meaning. Morality applies only in the world of karma, the world of ordinary empiric existence, which the enlightened man has left behind him. In the final state of the perfected man, as we have seen, there can be, strictly speaking, no action; so how can there be either moral or immoral action? The attitude of the Upaniṣads, and following them of most later Hindu systems, is then that morality has only a negative importance, and in the last analysis none whatever, in man's struggle for salvation. Immorality is a sign of imperfection; it can only be due to the prevalence in the soul of ignorance, causing desire, leading to action and rebirth. It must be got rid of. But it will fall away of itself with the attainment of true wisdom. And no amount of good deeds will bring that wisdom which alone can lead to release. Good deeds result in less unhappy existences, but that is all; salvation is release from all empiric existence. This does not prevent the teaching of a system of practical ethics, for the guidance of those who have not yet attained enlightenment. In actual practice, most Hindu sects inculcate very lofty moral principles; and many of them devote much attention thereto. But theoretically, at least, such things do not concern their fundamental aims.

Yet at times morality is spoken of as if it had a positive, if only qualified, value in preparing the soul for the reception of enlightenment. The fact is that the strictly intellectual or intuitional position is hard for the ordinary man to master. He needs the encouragement of more concrete aims, or helps toward the final aim. Many of the later sects recognize this, either implicitly or explicitly, and so do not hold strictly to the position that "knowledge," that is, immediate perception of the metaphysical truth, is the sole and exclusive means of salvation. Even the Upaniṣads do not quite do this, tho they come closer to it than many later systems. Despite the popular and even primitive background of their intellectualism, its relation to the old idea of the magic power of knowledge, the speculation of the Upaniṣads in its highest forms reached a point which must have placed it out of touch with the beliefs of most of the people. "Knowledge" of the abstract truth about the Soul proves a very different matter from "knowledge" of the things which are the ordinary aims of magic, when the human being tries to grasp it. Any man can "know" the "name" of his enemy, or of the disease which afflicts him, and by that "knowledge" can seek to cast a spell over them. But only a rare thinker can "know" the absolute metaphysical Truth, so that it is an ever-present illumination of his whole being,[25]

[25] "By a rare chance may a man see him (the Soul); by a rare chance likewise may another declare him; and by a rare chance may another hear (of) him. But even when he has heard (of) him, no one whatsoever knows him." Bhagavad Gītā, ii. 29; quoted from Kaṭha Upaniṣad, 2.7.

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

and this is what he must do in order to have the true "knowledge" that brings control of his own soul, of his destiny — the "knowledge" that means salvation. For ordinary human nature, there is needed a process of education, of discipline, which shall lead up to this enlightenment. Various sects make use of morality in this way, as a preliminary help. It purifies the soul and prepares it for enlightenment. Many Upaniṣad passages imply such a position, at least by saying that the wicked cannot hope for true knowledge — even tho other passages speak of knowledge as a sort of magic power by which one "sloughs off sin, as a snake sloughs off its skin." [26]

There are other preliminary steps or practices which various sects regard as useful in preparing the soul for the reception of the enlightenment which will finally bring release. And in some of the later Hindu sects these preliminary steps become so prominent that they obscure, or almost obliterate, what was originally the true goal — the attainment of metaphysical knowledge. Of these avenues of approach to knowledge, which however occasionally lead off into seductive bypaths, the chief, in addition to righteous conduct, are two. One is devotion to the personality of some god or prophet, who is regarded as a kind of personal savior or helper on the way to salvation. The other is the practice of asceticism in some form or other, regarded as an approach to a state of inaction (and so to the ideal, since all actions lead to rebirth), and also as helping to prepare for enlightenment by freeing the individual from attachment to the world, by gradually conquering the natural desires of the flesh.

The first of these two secondary methods, as we may call them, plays a very small rôle in the older Upaniṣads. The Upaniṣads recognize no prophet who could occupy the place which the Buddha holds for his followers as a personal Savior, quite analogous to the places of Jesus and Mohammed in Christianity and Islam. And most of them, particularly the earliest, do not speak of the One — Brahman, or Ātman, or the Existent, or whatever they call It — in sufficiently personal terms to make it easy to treat It as exercising grace in saving men, or as the object of any very personal devotion on the part of men. But for the Bhagavad Gītā, which is frankly monotheistic,[27] the case is very different; and we shall find that in it the "grace of God" is repeatedly spoken of as singling out His elect and bringing them to salvation by His divine choice. And no means for attaining salvation is more emphasized in the Gītā than *bhakti*, "devotion" to God, or fervent love of Him. Originally, no doubt, this devotion was to lead to knowledge, intellectual enlightenment, and so to release. But the intermediate step is often

[26] Praśna Upaniṣad, 5.5.

[27] This is certainly a reasonable statement in dealing with a work in which the principal speaker is represented as an incarnation of the Supreme Deity; altho there are not wanting in the Gītā, as we shall see in Chapter VI, passages in which the First Principle seems to be spoken of in impersonal, monistic terms.

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

lost sight of in the Gītā and in similar later works; they not infrequently speak of ecstatic love of God as leading immediately to absorption in Him, which is their conception of salvation. It is interesting to note, then, that even this position, contrary tho it is to the usual spirit of the Upaniṣads, finds expression in them, and precisely in two of them which were pretty certainly known to the author of the Gītā. One speaks of enlightenment as coming "by the grace of God," and recommends "devotion" (*bhakti*) to Him as a means for attaining it.[28] The other speaks of "beholding the greatness of the Soul (*ātman*) by the grace of the Creator (*dhātar*)," [29] and shortly after this the same text, not even using the term "Creator" or "God," or any other personal expression for the Supreme, says that "this Soul (*ātman*; here the Universal Soul) is not to be attained by instruction, by intellect, or by much holy learning; He is to be attained only by him whom He chooses; for him He reveals His own form." [30]

The other "secondary method" of gaining enlightenment, the method of withdrawal from the world by some form of asceticism, is more complicated in its history. In the oldest periods of Vedic speculation we hear much of what is called *tapas*. Already in the great monistic hymn of the Rig Veda, 10.129, the One is produced out of the primal chaos by the power of *tapas*. The word means literally "heat," and in cosmogonic connections it undoubtedly suggests the creative warmth that is symbolized by the brooding of a bird over its eggs. Belief in the development of the universe out of a cosmic egg appears not infrequently in early Hindu cosmogonies, and with it is clearly associated belief in *tapas*, warmth, as a force of cosmic evolution. But in religious language the same word had the figurative meaning of "religious, devotional fervor." It is the inspiration of the priest or holy man. It was thus nearly related to the notion of *brahman*, the holy word as the quintessence of religious spirit. It is possible that it had a partly physical connotation in this sense, too; the religious fervor probably was sometimes brought on or increased by physical exertion; and even the sacrificial ritual itself, being performed over the sacred fire, resulted in literal, physical "heat" for the officiating priests (the texts refer to this specifically). For these various reasons the power of *tapas*, "warmth" or "fervor," is prominently mentioned in early Vedic cosmogonies as a cosmic force. Sometimes it is made a sort of First Principle itself. More often the Creator is spoken of as "exercising *tapas*" in creating the universe.

But about the time of the early Upaniṣads the word *tapas* began to acquire a new connotation. From this period seems to date the development in

[28] Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad, 6.21, 23. This is a comparatively late Upaniṣad, probably not much older than the Gītā; there are various good reasons for believing that it was known to the Gītā's author.

[29] Kaṭha Upaniṣad, 2.20. The Gītā has several verbal quotations from this Upaniṣad.

[30] *Ibid.*, 2.23.

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

India of a recognized class of hermits or monks, men who renounced the world and lived a life devoted to meditation or some form of asceticism. The prominence of such people in later India is well known. They do not appear clearly in the early Vedic texts; and their appearance in large numbers is certainly related to the growth of world-weariness among the Hindu intellectuals, which accompanied and signalized the general views of life outlined in this chapter. If all ordinary life is vanity and vexation of spirit, and the only hope of salvation lies in knowledge of the Soul, which is to be attained thru mystic contemplation, naturally the intelligent man will be inclined to turn his back on the world and devote himself to a more or less hermit-like existence. There are, moreover, very special reasons for asceticism. Actions lead to rebirth; so inaction, or the nearest possible approach to it, withdrawal from the world, is desirable. Furthermore, as we have seen, desires are the root of evil, because they enchain man to the things of this life, and distract his attention from his true goal. He must, therefore, seek to overcome his desires. One way of doing this is to avoid the objects of desire as much as possible, by living a solitary life, preferably in the wilderness. Another way is by positive acts of self-repression, even self-torture, to "mortify the flesh" and reduce it to subjection. Another is by means of self-hypnosis to induce a state of trance, or half-trance, in which one may attain nearly complete, if only temporary, freedom from the distractions of the world, and a sort of approach to the "unconscious consciousness" of union with the One. All of these varying forms of ascetic austerities have been more or less practised by many Hindu sects, sometimes in very extreme forms. They are all suggested by the expression *tapas*, "heat, fervor," as it is used in the Upaniṣads and later. As so used the word contains both a physical and a "spiritual" connotation. Physical, in that many ascetics engaged in often very strenuous exertions, or deliberately subjected themselves to the heat of the sun and of fire, to subdue their physical passions. "Spiritual," in that their theoretical aim, at least, was always to produce the desired religious fervor or ecstasy thru which they hoped to gain enlightenment. In theory, all such practices were only a means, the end being enlightenment. They prepared the soul for this end by subduing desires and inducing a spiritual attitude favorable to the reception of enlightenment. But in this case, too, as in the case of the theory of divine grace and devotion to the Deity, the means became the end in some later sects, which came to think of salvation as resulting directly from asceticism, not from enlightenment brought on by asceticism There are sects which teach that salvation is sure to come to one who starves himself to death — the *ne plus ultra* of ascetic practice. This extreme, however, is exceptional.[31]

[31] In popular belief ascetic practices came to be regarded as a means of acquiring all sorts of supernatural or magic powers; just as knowledge (the acquisition of which

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

We see, then, that the word *tapas*, "fervor," had both a physical and a "spiritual" aspect in both the early Vedic speculations and their later successors, but that there was a change in the connotation on each side. The Upaniṣads took up the early word for "fervor" or "warmth" and reinterpreted it in terms of their own views. Common to both periods is the use of the primarily physical term to characterize a certain type of religious life, tho a different type in each period. The early use of the term in cosmogonic connections may also be presumed to have contributed to the use of it in the Upaniṣads as a tentative definition of the First Principle, or a means of knowing it. ("Seek to know the *brahman* by fervor [austerity, *tapas*]; *brahman* is fervor [austerity]!")[32] Not a few Upaniṣad passages speak of attaining the *ātman* thru *tapas*, either alone or in conjunction with other potencies. For them, however, it remains a subordinate matter, on the whole. The sentence just quoted is not at all typical of their general attitude. In this respect the Bhagavad Gītā agrees with them. Indeed, the usual attitude of the Gītā is definitely opposed to asceticism; it seeks to justify participation in normal, worldly life, tho with qualification. Only rarely does it speak in terms which seem to recommend withdrawal from the world.[33]

To summarize this chapter: the Upaniṣads show us the beginnings of the fundamental principles of later, classical Hinduism. These may be grouped under three general headings. First, pessimism: all ordinary life is evil. Second, transmigration, with the doctrine of karma: living souls are subject to an indefinite series of lives, all more or less like this life, the condition of the individual in each being determined by his moral conduct in previous existences. Third, salvation: the only hope for release from this endless chain of evil existences is (primarily) by "knowledge," that is, intuitive realization of the supreme metaphysical truth; as preparations or aids to the attainment of this knowledge are recognized morality, devotion to a supreme personality, and ascetic austerities, altho all of these are usually kept in a quite subordinate position in the Upaniṣads. In various later sects one or another of them at times assumes such importance as to obscure the original means of salvation, "knowledge." Except in this last respect, virtually all Hindu sects and philosophies agree regarding these basic postulates, however much they may differ on other matters.

---

was the theoretical object of ascetic practices) was understood by the vulgar in terms of magic power. Some of the later systems of philosophy which attach great importance to austerities are not free from this degradation of the principle.

[32] Taittirīya Upaniṣad, 3.2 ff.

[33] See Chapter VII.

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

CHAPTER IV

Prehistory of the God of the Bhagavad Gītā

It could hardly be expected that the popular interest would be gripped by Upaniṣadic thought. It was too speculative, too abstract, to appeal to any but a small proportion of the population. The great mass of mankind demanded, as always, a personal, quasi-human god or gods to worship; it could not be satisfied by mystic contemplation of a nameless Soul, even if it be the Soul of the universe. Some more acceptable outlet for the religious feeling of the people had to be provided; and there is good reason to believe that it was provided. Unfortunately, the evidence about it is mostly indirect and secondary. We can judge of it, for the most part, only from its traces in such later works as the Bhagavad Gītā, which clearly presuppose a considerable development of popular religion, distinct from the higher thought of the Upaniṣads but contemporary therewith. In the Gītā these two streams are blended. We have no records that show us the popular beliefs of that period in a pure form.

For this reason, it is scarcely possible to attempt any extensive reconstruction of those popular beliefs. The principal thing to be said about them is that they were certainly theistic, and presumably tended towards a monotheism, of a more or less qualified sort. That is, presumably various local or tribal deities were worshipped in different parts of India, each occupying a position somewhat similar to that of Yahweh among the Jews — each being regarded as the chief or perhaps the sole god of his people or tribe, tho the existence of the gods of other tribes was not denied. These local deities were, we may assume, of very different types and origins. Sometimes they may have been old gods of aboriginal, non-Aryan tribes. Sometimes they seem to have been local heroes, deified after death.

Such a local deity must have been the Kṛṣṇa who appears as the Supreme Deity, the "Blessed One," in the Bhagavad Gītā. He was apparently a deified local chieftain, the head of the Vṛṣṇi clan. Indeed, he appears as such, in strictly human guise, in the greater part of the Mahābhārata. In the Gītā he is still both god and man; an incarnation of the Deity in human form. We know nothing of the process by which he attained divine honors, nor of his earlier history as a god, before the Bhagavad Gītā, which is probably the earliest work preserved to us in which he appears as such. In this work he has all the attributes of a full-fledged monotheistic deity, and at the same time, as we shall see, the attributes of the Upaniṣadic Absolute. In other

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

words, the popular God is philosophized into a figure who can appeal to both the higher and the lower circles of the population. Therein lies the strength of Kṛṣṇaism in later India; it is many-sided enough to satisfy the religious requirements of almost any man, whatever his intellectual or social status may be.

The Upaniṣads themselves are not entirely free from quasi-monotheistic touches, some of which may perhaps be interpreted as concessions to this same popular demand for a personal god. Especially interesting, and important for later Hinduism, is the personalization of the philosophic term Brahman, as a name for the Absolute, which appears even in some of the earliest Upaniṣads. The word *brahman* is primarily and originally neuter in gender, and remains so usually thruout the Upaniṣads and the Bhagavad Gītā; but occasionally it acquires a personality, as a sort of creating and ruling deity, and then it has masculine gender. It thus becomes the god Brahmā, familiar to later Hinduism as the nominal head of the Triad consisting of Brahmā the Creator, Viṣṇu the Preserver, and Śiva the Destroyer. This trinity appears only in comparatively late Upaniṣads, and no clear mention of it is found in the Bhagavad Gītā, altho the Gītā at least once refers to the masculine and personal Brahmā, "the Lord sitting on the lotus-seat." [1] But this grammatical trick was not sufficient to satisfy the craving of the men of India. Even masculinized, Brahman-Brahmā remained too bloodless to attract many worshipers. Later Hinduism pays lip-homage to him, but reserves its real worship for his colleagues, Viṣṇu and Śiva.

Viṣṇu and Śiva, under various names and forms, are the real gods of later India. Śiva-worship, tho certainly much older than the Bhagavad Gītā, hardly appears therein,[2] and may therefore be left out of consideration in this book. But we must say a few words about Viṣṇu, since he was identified with Kṛṣṇa, the Gītā's God, or regarded as incarnate in Him. This identification seems to me to appear clearly in the Gītā itself.[3]

Viṣṇu was one of the gods of the Rig Veda, and probably, like most of them, a nature-god. He seems to have been a personification of the sun. But the Rig Veda contains a number of sun-gods (perhaps originally belonging to different tribes, or else representing different aspects of the sun's power). Viṣṇu is one of the less prominent and less important ones. He is distinctly a minor figure in the Rig Veda. We hear that he measures the universe in three great strides, which refer figuratively to the sun's progress

[1] xi. 15.

[2] Śiva, under various of his innumerable names, is however mentioned (e.g. x. 23).

[3] A distinguished Hindu scholar, the late Sir R. G. Bhandarkar, thought that Kṛṣṇa was not yet identified with Viṣṇu in the Gītā, tho he was soon afterwards. See his *Vaiṣṇavism, Śaivism and Minor Religious Systems*, page 13. But Kṛṣṇa is directly addressed as Viṣṇu in xi. 24 and 30; and I do not believe that Viṣṇu can here mean "the sun."

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

across the sky. The third stride lands him in "the highest foot-step (or, place; the word has both meanings) of Viṣṇu," which means the zenith. This is thought of as the highest point in the universe, and at times it is described as a kind of solar paradise, to which the spirits of the blessed dead may go. So in post-Rig-Vedic literature, we hear expressions of the desire for attaining "Viṣṇu's highest place." So, also, in this period, Viṣṇu is occasionally declared to be "the highest of the gods"; this is doubtless to be understood in a literal, physical sense, because Viṣṇu's abode is the "top of the world." In the same period, we find very frequently the statement that "Viṣṇu is the sacrifice." Why he should have been singled out for this honor, we cannot tell; there are other gods whose far greater prominence would seem to us to give them a better claim to be regarded as a personification of the ritual. But the frequency of the statement leaves no room for doubt that the priests of the "Middle Vedic" (Brāhmaṇa) period generally regarded Viṣṇu in this way. And since, as we have seen, to them the "sacrifice" was the central power of the universe, we see that from their point of view no higher compliment was possible. Evidently Viṣṇu was acquiring a much more dignified position than he had in the Rig Veda.

The Upaniṣads add nothing to the history of Viṣṇu. They — that is, the older ones, those which antedate the Gītā — mention his name only three or four times, and quite in the style of the Middle-Vedic period. But suddenly, in the Gītā and other contemporary writings, we find Viṣṇu recognized as a supreme monotheistic deity, worshiped either under his own name, or in the form of various incarnations, the chief of which is Kṛṣṇa. This was at a time when the Vedic religion, as a whole, was nearly dead. Its gods no longer had a real hold on any class of the people. Their existence was not denied, but they were reduced to the rank of petty spirits. Even the once all-important sacrifices were largely falling into disuse. But if the ritual religion was perishing, the priestly class was not. By this time it was recognized as a definite and hereditary caste, the brahmanhood, which claimed the headship of human society. With this fact, probably, is to be connected the identification of the god or hero Kṛṣṇa, and other popular gods and heroes, with the old Vedic god Viṣṇu. Thus a sacerdotal tinge was given to the thriving monotheism which had such a hold on the mass of the people. Brahmanism stooped to conquer; it absorbed popular cults which it had not the strength to uproot. The simple and ancient device of identification of one god with another furnished the means to this end.

It remains something of a mystery to scholars why Viṣṇu, rather than some other Vedic deity, was selected for this purpose. Even after the development described in the last paragraph but one, Viṣṇu is by no means the most prominent god of the pantheon. Many steps in the long process have evidently disappeared from our sight. But probably his frequent

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

identification with the sacrifice, and his growing eschatological importance as the ruler of a kind of paradise for the dead in his "highest place," have something to do with it.

We have, then, finally, a union of at least three strands in the monotheistic deity of the Bhagavad Gītā: a popular god-hero of a local tribe, an ancient Vedic deity belonging to the hieratic ritual religion, and the philosophic Absolute of the Upaniṣads. The blend is, as we shall see, by no means perfect. Especially the monistic, Upaniṣadic element is sometimes rather clearly distinguished from the theistic element or elements; the author of the Gītā himself underlines this distinction at times.[4] But for the most part it is hard to disentangle one from the other.

[4] See Chapter VI, p. 48.

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

SECOND PART

THE TEACHINGS OF THE BHAGAVAD GĪTĀ

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

CHAPTER V

Soul and Body

We saw that the Upaniṣads center their attention on a search for the central, fundamental, and animating principle of the universe, and of man; that these two objects of speculation are regarded in them as parallel, the universal macrocosm being compared to the human microcosm; and that this parallelism indeed turns into an identity, which results in an equation between the "soul" or real self of man and that of the universe. So frequent and striking are such expressions in the Upaniṣads that this is often, tho I think not without exaggeration, regarded as the prime motif of Upaniṣadic thought. It is "knowledge" of this mystic truth which makes man omnipotent, makes him master of the universe, and so "free"; free, that is, from the limitations and annoyances of finite life.

In spite of the fact that the Bhagavad Gītā is saturated with the atmosphere of the Upaniṣads, this doctrine of theirs is not exactly prominent in it. It is not unknown to it; several passages in which it speaks of the human soul come very close to that view.[1] It would indeed be strange if it had avoided it altogether. It is curious enough that it has so nearly suppressed it, in view of its obvious debt to Upaniṣadic thought. The chief reason for the suppression probably lay in the fact that this monistic view was not easy to reconcile with the ardent, devotional theism of the Gītā. Even tho, as we shall see, the Gītā regards God as immanent in all beings, and its author hopes for ultimate union with Him, still he seems to shrink from the bold assertion "I am God," which requires more courage than the Upaniṣadic "I am Brahman," simply because Brahman is impersonal and the Gītā's God is definitely personal. Union with God is projected into the future, and is not put on a basis of equality between the soul and God.[2] Once the Gītā speaks of the human soul as a *part* of God.[3] Generally God is a personality distinct from the human soul, and superior to it.

[1] ii. 17: "But know thou that That One (the human soul is referred to) by which all this universe is pervaded is indestructible. Of this imperishable one no one can cause the destruction." — ii. 24: "Eternal, omnipresent, fixed, immovable, everlasting is He (the human soul)." — xiii. 27: "Abiding alike in all beings, the supreme Lord (the human soul), not perishing when they (the beings) perish, — who sees him, he (truly) sees."

[2] Some of the Christian mystics seem more courageous. Compare Angelus Silesius's

"Ich bin so gross wie Gott,
Er ist wie ich so klein."

[3] xv. 7: "A part just of Me, becoming the eternal soul in living beings," etc.

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

The Upaniṣadic notion of the human soul is, however, clearly retained in the Gītā as far as concerns its individual nature. It is still the essential part of man, that which does not perish at death. Indeed, the dignity and importance of the soul is brought out if possible even more strongly than is usual in the Upaniṣads, in one respect; namely, in the contrast that is emphasized between the soul and what is not soul. This contrast is rather a minor matter in most of the Upaniṣads. They are so charmed by the contemplation of the soul, which they find in everything, that they virtually ignore the existence of everything that is not soul,[4] or else brush it aside with the summary remark that "whatever is other than that (the soul) is evil."[5] At any rate, most of them are not enough interested in the non-soul to speculate much about its nature. The Gītā, on the other hand, has definite theories about the structure of the non-soul or body, — largely inherited, to be sure, from older times, and to some extent hinted at in certain of the Upaniṣads These are used to contrast the body with the soul; and the comparison, of course, is much to the advantage of the soul. Thus in the opening part of the dialog, Kṛṣṇa instructs Arjuna that he should not grieve for the soul, because it is immortal, and inaccessible to the sufferings which afflict the body. "It is declared that these bodies come to an end; but the Embodied (Soul) in them is eternal, indestructible, unfathomable."[6] "He (the soul) is not born, nor does he ever die; nor, once being, shall he evermore cease to be. Unborn, eternal, everlasting from oldest times, he is not slain when the body is slain."[7]

We find, in fact, that the Gītā's most usual and characteristic position is definitely dualistic. There are two eternal principles, eternally distinct from each other: "soul" (usually called *puruṣa*, "man, person, spirit"; sometimes *ātman*, "self"; other synonyms also occur), and what may perhaps be called "non-soul" rather than "body," since, as we shall see presently, it includes what are among us commonly regarded as "mental" faculties; the usual Hindu term is *prakṛti*, "nature, material nature, matter." The soul is absolutely unitary, undifferentiated, and without qualities; not

[4] Some scholars say that they even *deny* the real existence of anything other than the soul, as certain schools of the later Vedānta philosophy do. I do not agree with this view.

[5] Bṛhad Āraṇyaka Upaniṣad, 3.4.2.

[6] ii. 18.

[7] ii. 20. Compare also ii. 11, 25, 30. It is painful to have to add that this doctrine is here applied to a justification of war, and of killing in general; since the soul cannot be killed, and the body does not matter (and since, moreover, it must die in any case, ii. 26, 27), "therefore fight," says Kṛṣṇa (ii. 18). A charitable explanation would be that this is a concession to the dramatic situation of the poem, as inserted in the Mahābhārata; and this could be supported by various texts in the Gītā which are distinctly hostile to violence. But we shall see that there are other ethical, as well as metaphysical, inconsistencies in the Gītā. See Chapter XI.

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

subject to any change or alteration, and not participating in any action. Material nature, or the non-soul, is what performs all acts. It assumes manifold forms, and is constantly subject to change — evolution, devolution, and variation.

The variety of material nature is expressed in two ways. First, it is composed of three elements called *guṇas*, that is, "threads, strands," or "qualities":[8] namely, *sattva*, "goodness, purity"; *rajas*, "passion, activity"; and *tamas*, "darkness, dullness, inactivity." Mingled in varying proportions, these three "strands" or qualities make up all matter. Preponderance of one or another of them determines the character of any given part of material nature.[9] But material nature includes what with us are often called the "mental" faculties of living beings, particularly of man. This is made clear in one passage in the Gītā,[10] where we find a second and much more elaborate statement of the constituents of material nature — or rather, this time, of its evolvents; for, tho this is not clearly stated here, it is obvious that we are dealing with an evolutionary theory which is very familiar in contemporary and later Hindu philosophy. According to this, out of the primal, undifferentiated "matter" develops first the faculty of consciousness or will (the term, *buddhi*, approximately covers both of these English terms); then the "I-faculty," the organ of self-consciousness (*ahaṃkāra*); then the thought-organ (*manas*, sometimes etymologically translated "mind"), which mediates between sense-perception and the self-consciousness, and is regarded as the function of a special, "inner" sense-organ; with it the faculties of the ten sense-organs,[11] five intellectual (of sight, smell, hearing, taste and feeling) and five organs of action (of speech [function of the speech-organs], grasping [of the hands], locomotion [of the feet], evacua-

[8] The word is probably both concrete and abstract in the Gītā; the *guṇas* are both material "constituent elements," like strands of a rope, and qualifying characteristics. No clear distinction was made at this time between these two things (cf. Oldenberg, *Upanishaden und Buddhismus*, 1st ed., p. 217 f.; 2d ed., p. 188 f.). The later Sāṃkhya philosophy insists that the *guṇas* are physical, constituent parts of matter, not what we call qualities. And this certainly fits the primary and literal meaning of the word *guṇa*, "strand (of a rope)." Yet its figurative meaning of "quality" is also very familiar in the Gītā's time.

[9] The results of the preponderance of each of the three "strands" in various parts of *prakṛti* are set forth in some detail in the Gītā, xiv. 5–18, and the whole of chapter xvii. Generally speaking, the theory is that the best and highest forms of matter or nature are those in which *sattva*, "goodness, purity," predominates; in the worst and lowest forms *tamas*, "darkness, dullness," predominates; the predominance of *rajas*, "activity" or "passion," is found in a large variety of forms whose ethical values are mostly intermediate or indeterminate.

[10] xiii. 5, 6.

[11] The Gītā seems to include both the physical organs and their functions in the same verbal expressions. I shall not here discuss the later Hindu usage.

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

tion, and generation); also the five "subtle elements," the abstract essences of the material objects (or as we say, reversing the direction, stimulants) of the five senses (sound, as the object of hearing, etc.); and finally the five gross elements, earth, air, fire, water, and ether.[12] All of these forms of material nature — twenty-four in all, including the "undifferentiated" form — are alike composed of the three above-mentioned "strands" (*guṇas*), in varying proportions. It will be seen that the two classifications are not inconsistent, but cross one another, the one being, so to speak, vertical, the other horizontal.

It is, as I have said, only "material nature" or "matter" that acts. "Actions are performed entirely by the strands (*guṇas*) of material nature. He whose soul is deluded by the I-faculty imagines that he is the doer." [13] That is, owing to the confusion created by the activity of the organ of self-consciousness — *which is part of matter, not of the soul* — one imagines that "he" himself (his soul, his real self, or *ātman*) performs actions. "But he who knows the truth of the separation (of the soul, on the one hand, from both) the strands (of matter) and action (on the other), knowing that (in any action) it is (not the soul that acts but) the strands of matter that act upon the strands, is not enthralled." [14] "And who sees that acts are exclusively performed by material nature alone, and likewise that his soul does nothing, he (truly) sees." [15] "The disciplined man who knows the truth shall think: 'I am not doing anything at all,' whether he be seeing, hearing, touching, smelling, eating, walking, sleeping, breathing, speaking, evacuating, grasping, opening or closing his eyes; he holds fast to the thought that it is the (material) senses that are operating on the objects of sense." [16] "When the Beholder (the soul) perceives that no other than the strands (of matter) acts and knows that which is above the strands, he goes unto My estate." [17]

What, then, is the function of the soul? As the passage last quoted indicates, it "beholds" the activities of matter, passively, and without participation. "Passively" in the sense that it has no relation to those activities at all; not in the sense that it is affected by them, for its true, fundamental nature is just as free from the effects of action as from its performance. "The Lord (the soul) does not receive (i.e., reap the fruit of)

[12] I shall refrain from describing the precise stages of this evolutionary process as set forth in the later Sāṃkhya philosophy. It is not clear to what extent they had been formulated in the time of the Gītā. One verse of the Gītā (iii. 42) lists a few of these "evolvents" in climactic order, but without asserting any genetic relationship, — in fact, perhaps implying rather that none exists, since the "highest" member of the series is there the Soul, which is elsewhere clearly stated to be unrelated to matter.

[13] iii. 27.

[14] iii. 28.

[15] xiii. 29.

[16] v. 8, 9.

[17] xiv. 19.

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

any one's sin, nor yet (of) his good deeds."[18] "Swords cut him not, fire burns him not, water wets him not, wind dries him not. He cannot be cut, he cannot be burnt, he cannot be wet, nor yet dried. Eternal, omnipresent, fixed, immovable, everlasting is he (the human soul)."[19] Elsewhere the soul is called the "knower" of matter: "This body is called the Field. He who knows it (i.e., the soul), him those who know the truth call the Field-knower."[20] The soul, then, merely looks on and "knows" matter and its acts, but has no real connection with them.

And yet, inconsistently as it seems at first sight, the soul is spoken of as experiencing pleasure and pain, which result from material contacts and processes. "Know that both material nature and the soul are eternal; know that both the modifications (or 'evolvents,' viz. will, I-faculty, organ of thought and other sense-organs, and subtle and gross elements) and the strands (*guṇas*) spring from material nature. Material nature is declared to be the cause of effects, instrumentality, and agency; the soul is declared to be the cause of enjoyment (i.e., experiencing) of pleasure and pain. For the soul, residing in material nature, enjoys the strands (*guṇas*) that are born of material nature. Its attachment to the strands is the reason for its various births in good and evil stations."[21] The key to the seeming inconsistency (which is really due to a certain laxity or inaccuracy in the passage just quoted) is indicated in the last sentence, the thought of which is more fully expressed in another passage, where it is said that the soul "draws (to itself) the (five) senses, with the organ of thought as the sixth, which rest in material nature. . . . Making use of hearing, sight, touch, taste, and smell, and the organ of thought (all of which are really material), it pursues the objects of sense. Fools do not perceive that it (the soul) is attended by the strands (*guṇas*, of matter) when it is passing out or remaining fixed (in the body) or enjoying (experiencing, viz. the objects of sense). Those whose eye is knowledge see this."[22] It is only because the soul is associated with matter that it "enjoys," or rather (it would be more accurate to say) *seems* to "enjoy," material processes. "Those who are deluded by the strands (*guṇas*) of material nature are enthralled in the actions of the strands."[23] In other words, it is, strictly speaking, not the soul that "enjoys" — experiences — anything. That it seems to do so is due to the confusion caused by the organ of self-consciousness, the "I-faculty," which is a product of material nature and really quite disconnected with the soul, and from which in turn spring all the sense-organs and their objects. Were it not for this, the soul would perceive that it has no relation whatever to the activities and sufferings of matter. Since to the Gītā the general Hindu

[18] v. 15.
[19] ii. 23, 24
[20] xiii. 1.
[21] xiii. 19–21.
[22] xv. 7–10.
[23] iii. 29.

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

pessimistic view of life is axiomatic, it follows that this "enjoyment" is in reality naught but evil and suffering, and that the association of the soul with matter is a bondage. "Goodness (*sattva*), activity (passion, *rajas*) and darkness (*tamas*), — these strands, springing from material nature, bind in the body the immortal soul." [24] It is only the unenlightened man whom they *can* bind. When one attains true enlightenment, that is, realization of the true nature of the soul and matter and their fundamental independence of each other, then, by virtue of this perfect, mystic knowledge, he obtains release; his soul transcends matter and is freed from it for good and all, and he is freed from the chain of rebirths. "Who thus understands the soul and material nature together with the strands (of the latter), — in whatever state he may be, he is not (to be) born again." [25] "The Embodied (Soul), transcending these three strands (of matter) that spring from the body, freed from birth, death, old age, and sorrow, attains immortality (here a poetic expression for *nirvāṇa*)." [26] "Mentally abandoning all actions (that is, taking no interest in any action which the body may perform), the Embodied (Soul) sits at peace, in control, in his nine-doored citadel (the body), and neither acts nor causes action at all." [27]

Note that this is a distinctly anthropomorphic dualism. As we have already seen, it is characteristic of Hindu speculation that it thinks of the whole universe in human terms; this was particularly true of the Upaniṣads, and remains true, generally speaking, of all later systems. This attitude assumes various forms. The Gītā says: "All creatures whatsoever, motionless (inanimate objects and plants) or moving (animals), are produced by the union of the Field (material nature) and the Field-knower (the soul)." [28] This seems to attribute to all nature not only "mental" faculties, will, self-consciousness, and thinking organ, which are parts of material nature and its primary evolvents, but also a soul that is distinct from material nature. Some Hindu sects — particularly the Jains — clearly and definitely accept the extreme implications of this theory, and believe that even inanimate objects are inhabited by souls, which are subject to transmigration like animal souls. Other Hindu systems do not carry it as far as that, at least in definite statements. But to all of them man is the only part of the universe that really counts. Animals (usually plants also) are to them potential humans; and the rest of the world they virtually ignore in their speculations. We need not consider here the extreme idealistic monism of Śaṃkara's Vedānta

[24] xiv. 5.
[25] xiii. 23.
[26] xiv. 20.
[27] v. 13. We shall have more to say of the various means of salvation found in the Gītā in Chapters VIII and IX.
[28] xiii. 26.

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

philosophy, according to which there is only One that truly exists, namely Brahman, the world soul, with which the human soul is really identical; all else is illusion (*māyā*), existing only in appearance, as a mirage, and not in reality. This system developed long after the Gītā, as it seems to me, altho it claims to be founded on the Upaniṣads. In a sense it is founded on them; it is only the logical conclusion, or extreme application, of their doctrine that the essential part of man is one with the essential part of the universe. But the Upaniṣads did not say "the non-soul does not exist." They only tended to ignore its existence or its importance — to wave it aside as unworthy of their consideration; they were not interested in it. This explains why the Upaniṣads could be made the basis for such diametrically opposite systems as the monism of Śaṃkara's Vedānta on the one hand and the Gītā's dualism on the other. The latter was reduced to more systematic forms by the later Sāṃkhya and Yoga philosophies, both of which recognize the reality and independence of soul and matter. They differ on the existence of God, which is accepted by the Yoga but denied by the Sāṃkhya.[29] The Gītā agrees with the Yoga in this respect. All of these views derive from the Upaniṣadic speculations centering about the human soul; and all agree that the non-soul, or material nature, is something from which the soul should utterly detach itself, whether it really exists (Gītā, Sāṃkhya, and Yoga) or is merely illusory (Śaṃkara's Vedānta).

[29] Or rather by certain representatives of the later Sāṃkhya, which have been, a little hastily, taken as typical of the whole school. As a matter of fact, a theistic Sāṃkhya has probably always existed, and was certainly known late as well as early.

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

CHAPTER VI

The Nature of God

We have spoken of the metaphysics of the Gītā as dualistic, as recognizing two fundamental principles, the soul and the non-soul (body, or material nature). But it is impossible to read far in the Gītā without finding that this description does not fully represent its author's metaphysics, at least in his most typical mood. It leaves out of account his idea of God, which is as it were superimposed upon the dualistic system outlined in the last chapter.

How does God fit into this system? Is He a sort of third principle, higher than the other two and distinct from them? So we are told at times, perhaps most clearly in the following passage: "There are two spirits [1] here in the world, a perishable and an imperishable one. The perishable (i.e., material nature) is all beings. The imperishable (i.e., the soul, spirit) is called the immovable (unchangeable). But there is another, a supreme Spirit, called the Highest Soul (Paramātman), the Eternal Lord who enters into the three worlds and supports them." [2] Here the Supreme Soul, God, is definitely set off against the individual soul and matter, as a third principle. Somewhat similarly in another passage, we first have a statement of the ordinary dualism: "This body is called the Field; him who knows it (the soul) those who know the truth call the Field-knower" — which is immediately followed by this: "Know that I (God) am the Field-knower in all Fields." [3]

But even in these very passages let it be noted that God, tho in a sense something other than either material nature or the individual souls of men, is at the same time regarded as immanent in them. "Whoso sees Me in all and all in Me, for him I am not lost, and he is not lost for Me. Whoso, attaining to (belief in) oneness, reveres Me as located in all beings, he, the disciplined, tho he may abide in any possible state, abides in Me." [4] "Attaining to (belief in) *oneness*!" Thus thru its God the Gītā seems after all

[1] The word used is *puruṣa*, literally "man," which elsewhere means strictly "soul" and is not applied to the body or material nature; yet here the "perishable spirit" can obviously mean nothing but *prakṛti*, material nature. This is an example of the loose language of the Gītā which often reminds us that we are reading a mystic poem, not a logical treatise on metaphysics.

[2] xv. 16, 17.

[3] xiii. 1,2.

[4] vi. 30, 31.

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

to arrive at an ultimate monism. The essential part, the fundamental element, in every thing, is after all One — is God. "There is nothing else that is higher than I (beyond, outside of Me); on Me this All is strung like necklaces of pearls on a string."[5] "Also the seed of all beings, that am I. There is no being, moving or motionless, that is without Me."[6] "I am taste in water, the light in the moon and sun, the sacred syllable Om in all the Vedas, sound in the ether, manliness in men. The goodly odor in the earth am I, and brilliance in the fire; I am life in all beings, and austerity in ascetics. Know Me as the eternal seed of all creatures. I am the intelligence of the intelligent, the majesty of the majestic."[7] God is the animating principle in everything; it is He that "makes the wheels" of the universe "go 'round," that acts in all natural activities and processes: "The Lord abides in the heart of all beings and makes all beings go around by His mysterious power (*māyā*), as if they were fixed on a (revolving) machine (that is, probably, like puppets in a puppet-play)."[8] "The splendor of the sun that illumines the whole world and the splendor that is in the moon and in fire, know that to be My splendor. Entering into the earth I support (all) beings by My power; becoming the juicy soma I make all plants to grow. Becoming fire (as the principle of digestion, regarded by the Hindus as a 'cooking' by bodily heat) I enter into the bodies of animate creatures, and, joining with the upper and nether breaths, I digest their food of all four sorts. I have entered into the heart of every man; from Me come memory, knowledge, and disputation (in reasoning). I alone am the object of the (sacred) knowledge of all the Vedas; I am the author of the Vedānta (the Upaniṣads, the summation of the esoteric doctrines of the Vedas), and I too am the sole knower of the Veda."[9] So, of course, God is repeatedly declared to be the Creator, Supporter, Ruler of all that is; the origin and dissolution of the universe,[10] "both death that carries off all and the origin of creatures that are to be,"[11] "both immortality and death, both the existent and the non-existent,"[12] "the beginning and the middle and the end of beings."[13]

Such words lead to the question of the existence of evil and how to reconcile it with the belief in an all-embracing God. Every theistic religion has its difficulties with the problem of evil. In describing the manifestations of God in the universe, the Gītā, quite naturally, tends to emphasize the good side of things; but at times it does not shrink from including the evil also. Since *all* comes from God, it seems impossible to deny that origin to anything. "Whatsoever states of being there are, be they of the nature of goodness, passion, or darkness (the three *guṇas* or strands of matter, as set forth in the last chapter), know that all of them come from Me

[5] vii. 7.
[6] x. 39.
[7] vii. 8–10.
[8] xviii. 61.
[9] xv. 12–15.
[10] vii. 6.
[11] x. 34.
[12] ix. 19.
[13] x. 20, x. 32.

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

alone."[14] In another passage, God is declared the source of all "psychic" states and experiences, *good and bad alike*, tho the good predominate in the list: "Enlightenment, knowledge, freedom from delusion, patience, truth, self-control, peace, pleasure, *pain*, coming-into-being, passing away, *fear*, and fearlessness too; harmlessness, indifference (equanimity), content, austerity, generosity, fame, and *disrepute* — the states of creatures, of all various sorts, come from Me alone."[15] More definite recognition of the origin even of evil in God is found in this: "I am the gambling of rogues, the majesty of the majestic; I am conquest, I am adventure (of conquerors and adventurers); I am the courage of the courageous. . . . I am the violence of conquerors, I am the statecraft of ambitious princes; I too am the taciturnity of things that are secret, I am the knowledge of the learned."[16]

If even in these passages we seem to find a tendency to slur over the evil of the world and its necessary relation to a quasi-pantheistic God, in other places the Gītā feels it necessary to qualify its semipantheism by definitely ruling out evil from God's nature. Thus to a passage in the seventh chapter which is strongly suggestive of pantheism, and which I quoted on the preceding page — "I am taste in water, etc.; I am the intelligence of the intelligent, the majesty of the majestic" — there is added this significant verse: "I am the strength of the strong, *free from lust and passion*; I am desire in (all) beings (but) *not* (such desire as is) *opposed to righteousness*."[17] Thus the Gītā strengthens its appeal to the natural man, or to "common sense," at the expense of logic and consistency.

This stricture (if it be considered a stricture) seems to me not unfair, even tho I doubt whether it can be said that the Gītā ever commits itself to absolute pantheism. It undoubtedly comes very close to it, as in some of the passages I have quoted. That God is *in* all, or all in God, it frequently says; and hence we may fairly ask whether God is also in that which is evil (or it in Him). But this is not exactly saying that God *is* all, that God is identical with all and all with God, there being no remainder on either side. Such a definitely pantheistic statement is not, I think, to be found in the Gītā. Certainly we find many expressions which seem to deny it. And that in two ways. In the first place, God's nature may be limited by the exclusion of certain parts of the universe or forms of existence. And secondly, God is spoken of as extending beyond the universe, as including more than "all beings."

As to the first point, the word "limited" as applied to God's nature is my own, and would undoubtedly have been strenuously repudiated by the author of the Gītā. He would have said — indeed he does say again and again, in many different ways — that God is limitless, that He includes *all*

[14] vii. 12.
[15] x. 4, 5.
[16] x. 36, 38.
[17] vii. 11.

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

forms. Yet we have seen that at times he feels compelled to deny that God manifests Himself in certain forms of existence which are felt as morally evil; altho at other times he swallows even this dose. Whatever terminology one uses, the fact remains that the Gītā repeatedly manifests a tendency to find God only in the best or highest forms of existence. The worse and lower forms are at least implicitly left out. This tendency is so natural as to be almost inevitable in a writer who is, after all, pervaded by a spirit of ardent, personal theism — however tinged with quasi-pantheism. Philosophically, the doctrine that God is *in* all leaves a loophole which can be stretched to admit a good deal. God is the soul, the essential part of everything; this may be interpreted as meaning the highest or noblest part of everything. Now lay the emphasis on the word *part*, and the trick is turned. Any entity may be regarded as a part of some larger whole, just as any entity (except perhaps, for the time being at least, the modern proton and neutron) may be treated as a compound whole and analyzed into parts. By choosing your "whole" and making it sufficiently inclusive, God can be found in some "part" of every "whole," and yet excused from responsibility for anything that would seem unworthy of Him. Such a background seems needed to account for such passages as the long series of verses found in the tenth chapter,[18] in which God is identified with (*only!*) the first, highest, or best, of every conceivable class of beings: "Of lights I am the sun . . . of stars the moon, of Vedas the Sāma Veda, of gods Indra (the king of the old Vedic gods), of sense-organs the thought-organ . . . of mountains Mount Meru," and so forth indefinitely.

On the other hand, the Gītā's theism differs from pantheism also in that it regards God as *more* than the universe. "Whatsoever creature possesses lordliness or majesty or greatness, know thou that every such creature springs from a *fraction* of My glory. . . . With *one part* of Myself I remain the support of this entire universe." [19] "I am not in them (all beings); they are in Me." [20] "By Me all this world is permeated, by Me whose form is unmanifest. All beings rest in Me; and I do not rest in them." [21] In the next verse after this last, the author retracts even this statement; it is too much to say even that the world is in God: "And (yet) beings do not rest in Me; behold My divine mystery! My self is the support of beings, and does not rest in beings; it is the cause of being of beings." [22] The dictum that the First Principle is more than all existing things, that the universe is only a *part* thereof, is at least as old as the "Puruṣa" hymn of the Rig Veda,[23] in which the entire universe is derived from only one-quarter of the cosmic Puruṣa or "Person."

[18] x. 21–37.
[19] x. 41, 42.
[20] vii. 12.
[21] ix. 4.
[22] ix. 5.
[23] RV. 10.90.3, 4.

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

This is by no means the only point in which the Gītā's picture of God shows relations with older formulas for the First Principle. While, as we have seen, the older speculations, so far as we know them, tend to impersonal and non-theistic formulations of the One, still many of the expressions which they use in describing that One can quite well be applied to a personal God; and they and similar expressions are so applied in the Gītā. Many of the Gītā's descriptions of God sound as if they were taken bodily from the Upaniṣads. Thus: "Thou art the Supreme Brahman, the Supreme Station (or Light), the Supreme Purifier; the eternal Puruṣa ('Person,' Spirit), the divine, the Primal God, the Unborn Lord."[24] "The ancient Seer, the Governor, finer than an atom . . . the Establisher of all, whose form is unthinkable, the Sun-colored, who is beyond darkness."[25] "I am the father of this world, the mother, the establisher, the ancestor. . . . The goal, supporter, lord, witness, dwelling-place, refuge, friend; the origin, dissolution, maintenance, treasure-house, the eternal seed (of all)."[26] The term Brahman, favorite expression in the Upaniṣads for the Absolute, is frequently found in the Gītā; and often it is hard to say whether the author means to identify Brahman with God or not. The fact doubtless is that, as set forth in Chapter IV, the Upaniṣadic Brahman has contributed largely to the Gītā's notion of God, which has absorbed it along with other, more theistic elements. As a rule, no clear distinction is made between them. But in one or two places the Gītā shows a realization of a possible difference of opinion as to whether the Supreme is personal or impersonal. And, most interestingly, it definitely recognizes *both* beliefs as leading to salvation, — that is, as in some sense or other true, or at any rate not wholly false; altho it prefers the personal theory. "Arjuna said: 'Those devotees who thus with constant discipline revere Thee, and those who revere the Imperishable, the Unmanifest (i.e., the impersonal Brahman), which of these are the best knowers of discipline?' The Blessed One replied: 'Those who fix their minds upon Me and revere Me with constant discipline, pervaded with supreme faith, them I consider the best-disciplined. But those who revere the Imperishable, Indescribable, Unmanifest, Omnipresent, and Unthinkable, the Immovable, Unchangeable, Immutable, — restraining completely all their senses, and keeping their minds indifferent in all circumstances, devoted to the welfare of all creatures, — they too reach Me after all. Greater is the toil for those who fix their minds on the Unmanifest. For the unmanifest goal is hard for embodied creatures to attain.'"[27] Could we ask for any clearer proof of the thesis set forth in Chapter IV? The abstract, impersonal Absolute of the Upaniṣads was more than the mind of the average man could grasp. The Gītā represents a sort of compromise between that speculative

[24] x. 12.
[25] viii. 9.
[26] ix. 17, 18.
[27] xii. 1–5.

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

religion and popular theology. It provides an "easier way" to salvation, without denying the possibility of salvation to those hardier intellects which chose the more laborious, abstract path. We shall see later that in other ways, too, the Gītā tries to save men the trouble of mental exertion. It is quite characteristic of it to regard intellectual methods as difficult and unnecessary. It is "easier" for the ordinary man to worship a personal, anthropomorphic Deity than to fix his attention on an impersonal Absolute. So the Gītā, while allowing man to choose, recommends the belief in a personal God.

Elsewhere the impersonal Brahman is more or less distinctly subordinated to the personal God. Thus the following description is quite Upaniṣadic, except for the single phrase in which the Brahman is described as "ruled by Me": "The object of knowledge I will now set forth, knowing which one gains immortality; the beginningless Brahman, *ruled by Me*;[28] it is declared to be neither existent nor non-existent. It has hands and feet on all sides, eyes, heads, and faces on all sides, hearing on all sides, in the world; it permanently envelops everything. It has the semblance of the qualities of all the senses, but is free from all the senses; it is unattached, and yet it bears all; it is free from the strands, yet it experiences the strands (of material nature). Both without and within all beings; immovable and yet moving; because of its subtility it cannot be known; it is both afar off and near. Both undivided and as it were divided, it resides in (all) beings; it is to be known as the supporter of beings, and it is their consumer and their originator too. It, too, is called the light of lights, that is beyond darkness; knowledge, and the object of knowledge, and what is to be reached by knowledge; it is settled in the heart of all."[29] The impersonal Brahman is nominally granted all the dignity which the Upaniṣads claim for it — and yet it depends on the personal God. "For I am the foundation of Brahman!"[30] Other passages in which the Brahman is spoken of as the Supreme Soul, the One that is in all creatures, or the "Possessor-of-the-Field," leave us more or less uncertain as to just how the author would have formulated his thought if hard pressed. "When one perceives that the various estates of creatures are all fixed in One, and that it is just from that One that they spread out, then he attains Brahman. Because it is without beginning and free from the strands, this eternal supreme Soul (*ātman*), even tho it resides in the body, does not act, nor is it stained (affected, by actions). As the

[28] Literally, "having Me as the chief"; it is hard to determine the precise *nuance* of the phrase, but it seems to me to imply some subordination of the Brahman to "Me" (God). Others, by a different division of words, exclude the reference to "Me" from this passage. But xiv. 27, quoted below, is unambiguous and proves that my interpretation is at least possible.

[29] xiii. 12–17.

[30] xiv. 27.

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

omnipresent ether, because of its subtility, is not stained, so the Soul, residing in every body, is not stained. As the one sun illumines this whole world, so the Possessor-of-the-Field illumines the whole Field (material body)." [31] Is this impersonal, Upaniṣadic monism? Or is the One implicitly thought of under a personal, theistic guise? Or, as in the foregoing, is God the "foundation" of It? In a preceding verse [32] we were told that "I (God) am the Field-knower in all Fields"; this suggests that the "Possessor-of-the-Field" is regarded as the personal God. Again: "But higher than this (world of perishable beings) is another, eternal being . . . which perishes not when all beings perish. (This) unmanifest is called the eternal; they call it the highest goal, which having attained they do not return; *it is My supreme station* (or, *light*). This supreme spirit (*puruṣa*) is to be attained by single devotion; within it all beings rest; by it this universe is pervaded." [33] Again, we might think that we were reading a non-theistic Upaniṣad, but for the little phrase, "it is My supreme station (or, light)." Does this mean something else than that "Brahman is God"? Let the mystic answer. The fact seems to be that the author attempts to avoid careful definition of these terms. Or, to put it otherwise, he does not feel able to get rid of the Upaniṣadic Absolute, but he strives, perhaps unwittingly, to color it with his personal theism.

Elsewhere the theory of man as a dualism, a combination of "soul" and "body" or "material nature," leads to a macrocosmic dualism in which God, the Soul of the Universe, is set over against the cosmic or universal Prakṛti, "Material Nature" as a whole, which is then spoken of as *God's body*, as it were — God's material nature. So God too is dualistic; He has a double nature, a "lower" or material, and a "higher" or spiritual. "Earth, water, fire, wind, ether, thought-organ, consciousness, and I-faculty: thus is divided My material nature, eight-fold. This is (My) lower (nature). But know My other nature, higher than that. It is the Soul by which this world is sustained." [34] And just as the material nature of man confuses and deceives him, so that he thinks that what is really matter is himself (his soul), so he confuses God's body — manifest material nature — with God's unmanifest Self. "Deluded by these conditions of existence, composed of the Three Strands (*guṇas*, of material nature), this whole world fails to know Me, who am superior to them and eternal. For this is My divine illusion (*māyā*, trick, piece of jugglery), composed of the (three) strands, hard to get past. Those who resort solely to Me penetrate beyond this illusion." [35] "Foolish men conceive Me, the Unmanifest, as having become manifest. They do not know My higher nature, everlasting and supreme." [36]

[31] xiii. 30–33.
[32] xiii. 2.
[33] viii. 20–22.
[34] vii. 4, 5.
[35] vii. 13, 14.
[36] vii. 24.

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

The adherents of the Vedānta philosophy interpret such passages as meaning that material nature is "illusion" (*māyā*) in the sense that it does not really exist. I believe they are wrong. The Gītā only means that the Soul — universal Soul or God as well as individual soul — is utterly distinct from material nature or body; the "illusion" consists in the apparent blending of the two. The wise man should realize the distinction; but this does not imply the nonexistence of either. In my opinion the word *māyā* did not acquire its Vedāntic sense of "world-mirage" until long after the Gītā's time. The reality of material nature is clearly indicated in many passages in the Gītā. Thus it accepts the doctrine of evolution and devolution of all nature at the beginning and end of successive world-eons, a theory which is familiar in Hindu cosmogonic speculations, and makes God the "overseer" of the process, and *His* material nature the world-stuff out of which all material creatures evolve and into which they devolve. "All beings pass into My material nature at the end of an eon, and at the beginning of (the next) eon I send them forth again. Resting upon My own material nature, I send forth again and again this whole host of beings, which is powerless (by itself), by the power of (My) material nature. . . . With Me as overseer, material nature creates the world of moving and unmoving beings. This is the cause by which the world revolves." [37] This same process of successive creations in successive eons is alluded to elsewhere [38] and is there treated as wholly material, not even as supervised by the Supreme Soul, which however is mentioned in the following verses [39] as "higher than all that"; He does not perish when all beings perish at the end of an eon. But there is no suggestion in any of these passages that material nature is in any sense unreal.

In another very curious and interesting passage this creative activity is treated as a sexual relation between God, as the Supreme Soul (the male principle), and the female principle of inert or receptive matter. Instead of an evolution of beings out of matter independently of the Supreme Soul, or with Him merely as "overseer" of the process, the Supreme Soul or God "plants the germ" in the womb of nature, and from this union all beings evolve. But here — most curiously — the cosmic matter is not called by the usual name of Prakṛti, material nature, as we should expect [40] (altho this term would be peculiarly appropriate to such a connection, since the word *prakṛti* is grammatically of the feminine gender), but instead is called *Brahman*, which has neuter gender! "My womb is the great Brahman; in

[37] ix. 7, 8, 10.
[38] viii, 18, 19.
[39] viii. 20–22.
[40] And, be it noted, as later speculations call it; for this same sexual figure is used in later philosophy.

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

it I plant the germ. Thence comes the origin of all beings. Whatsoever forms originate in all wombs, of them great Brahman is the womb (mother); I am the father that furnishes the seed." [41] Brahman may be an equivalent for Prakṛti, material nature, in another passage also: "Whoso lays his actions upon Brahman and does his acts while avoiding attachment (or interest in the results; compare Chapter VII), to him evil does not cling, as water clings not to a lotus-leaf." [42] The context here permits, without compelling, the view that Brahman means "material nature," which is, as we have already seen, solely responsible for all actions. In these passages a strange fate has overtaken the Upaniṣadic Brahman. Originally the Soul of the universe, it has been so far degraded as to be definitely deprived of all spirituality, and identified with the inert cosmic Matter, which is precisely all that is *not* Soul. No more significant indication could be found of the Gītā's personal theism. For nothing could be clearer than the reason for this dethronement of the Brahman. It was impersonal; and so, logically, it must either make way for, or be absorbed by, the personal God of the Gītā. Of these two alternatives, the Gītā, with the catholicity of the true mystic, chooses both, and neither. As we have seen in this chapter, Brahman (1) is absorbed into God, who assumes all its characteristics; (2) is differentiated from God and placed in some sort of subordinate position to Him, or made a lower manifestation of Him; and (3) still at times retains its ancient prestige as the Absolute, the One-in-All. All these positions appear side by side in the Gītā. Often its references to the Brahman are so vague as to leave us in doubt as to just how the author was thinking of it for the moment.[43]

The whole material universe is, then, in some sense God's manifest form or material nature. But of far greater practical importance, for the development of the religion taught by the Gītā, is this further fact, that God, by the exercise of his *māyā* or "mysterious power," can and does take on empiric, personal existence as an individual being in the world of beings. "Tho I am unborn, tho My Self is eternal, tho I am the Lord of Beings, I resort to My own material nature and take on (empiric) being, by My own mysterious power." [44] This is of course a cardinal doctrine of the Gītā.

[41] xiv. 3, 4. [42] v. 10.

[43] There is no clear indication that the Gītā knew the theory of the Trimūrti, the supreme triad consisting of Brahmā (as a masculine deity, the Creator-God), Viṣṇu, and Śiva, which is familiar in later Hinduism. Only once does the word Brahman in the Gītā have masculine gender unmistakably; in some of its occurrences the forms are ambiguous and could be either masculine or neuter, but when unambiguous it is always neuter except in a single instance. In that one occurrence (xi. 15) the god Brahmā is mentioned merely as one of the numerous beings that appear mystically manifested in the vision of the Deity's supreme form as revealed to Arjuna, in the eleventh chapter.

[44] iv. 6.

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

Kṛṣṇa, the principal speaker in the dialog, is himself such an incarnation of the Deity. He is not the only one; God appears upon earth again and again, to accomplish His purposes. And His purposes are expressed in the following famous verses: "For whenever right languishes, and unright shows its head, then I send Myself forth. To save the righteous, to destroy the wicked, to establish the right, I come into being in age after age." [45] God condescends to become man Himself, for the benefit of mankind. This is the beginning of the famous system of *avatārs* or incarnations of God, which became so characteristic of later Viṣṇuism and a prime source of its strength. No Christian community needs to be told how such a doctrine of a loving God who is born upon earth to save the world can conquer the hearts of men.

Of course, God appears in such an incarnation not in His true, supernal form. That form is not only invisible to the eye of man, or even of the (popular) "gods," but also unknowable to their minds. "I know all beings that have been, that are, and that shall be; but no one knows Me." [46] "The throngs of the gods know not My origin, nor the great seers (*ṛshis*); for I am the starting-point of the gods and the great seers altogether." [47] None but God Himself knows Himself, says Arjuna: "All this I hold to be true, that Thou tellest me; for neither gods nor demons know Thy manifestation, O Blessed One. Thou Thyself alone knowest Thyself by Thyself, O Supreme Spirit, Cause of being of Beings, Lord of Beings, God of Gods, Lord of the World." [48] But as a special act of grace, granted to the few whom God elects, and who serve Him with pure devotion, He may reveal His Supreme form. This He does to Arjuna, in the famous eleventh chapter of the Gītā, the climax of the poem — after first giving him a supernatural power of sight, since his natural eye could not behold the marvel.[49] The mystic vision is revealed by a pure act of God's grace. No amount of pious rites and performances can win it; it is granted only to the chosen of God, and, we are told, to Arjuna first of all mankind. "I in My grace have shown thee, Arjuna, this supreme form of Mine, by My own mysterious power; this majestic, universal, infinite, primeval form, which has not been seen before by any other than thee. Not by the Veda, by sacrifices or study, nor by almsgiving or rites or severe penance, can I be seen in this form by any other than thee in the world of men." [50] As to what Arjuna saw — of course, words fail utterly to describe it. It is the mystic's direct vision of God. The greater part of the eleventh chapter of the Gītā is devoted to the confessedly vain attempt to describe this indescribable. The ecstatic language of the description is hard to transfer to another tongue. Even in externals the passage differs from its surroundings; instead of the sober meter of most of

[45] iv. 7, 8.
[46] vii. 26.
[47] x. 2.
[48] x. 14, 15.
[49] xi. 8.
[50] xi. 47, 48.

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

the poem, it breaks forth into more elaborate lyric measures, which Sir Edwin Arnold imitates in his English version. The vision is described as "made up of all marvels." [51] "If the light of a thousand suns should suddenly burst forth in the sky, it were like His glory." [52] "Arjuna beheld the whole world there united, and yet infinitely divided, in the form of the God of Gods." [53] Therein were contained all creatures, the gods (Brahmā [54] and the rest), all the seers, the supernatural race of serpents, and all other beings; [55] there was neither beginning nor middle nor end to His form;[56] the sun and moon are His eyes, His face is flaming fire, He burns the whole world with His radiance.[57] And so on. We recognize the type of ecstasy which so many mystics of all times and lands have told of, and which, they all agree, can only be realized at first hand, not described in terms comprehensible to another unless the other be a brother-mystic who has himself enjoyed the experience.

[51] xi. 11.
[52] xi. 12.
[53] xi. 13.
[54] Here occurs the only unmistakable reference to the masculine God Brahmā that is found in the Gītā.
[55] xi. 15.
[56] xi. 16.
[57] xi. 19.

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

CHAPTER VII

Action and Rebirth

The metaphysical views set forth in the last two chapters are to be understood as based upon or joined with the structure of general Hinduism which was briefly explained in my third chapter. It never occurred to the author of the Gītā to question the doctrines of pessimism, rebirth under the control of karma or "action," and salvation thru ultimate release from that round of rebirths. To him they are not so much points to be proved as underlying principles, which are axiomatic in quality. In emphasizing the immortality of the soul he compares the successive lives of an individual to successive states (childhood, maturity, old age) in one life, or to changes of garments: "As in this body childhood, young manhood, and old age come to the Embodied (Soul), so It proceeds to other bodies. The wise man is not confused in this." [1] "As, laying aside worn-out garments, a man takes on other, new ones, so laying aside worn-out bodies the Embodied (Soul) enters into other, new ones." [2] These existences are, of course, all bodily ones; and that means that they are subject to all the ills that afflict the body. For if, as we have seen, the Soul is in reality independent of the body, it is only the enlightened soul which succeeds in realizing this independence, in perceiving that what affects the body does not affect him. As long as, deluded by the material organ of self-consciousness, the "I-faculty," he imagines that *he* acts and suffers, so long he is enthralled, enchained in the round of existences. It is often stated, and always implied, that this chain is an evil, — that all bodily existence entails misery. Rebirth is called "the home (or source) of misery." [3] What results in its prolongation is therefore evil; what leads to release from it is or should be the chief aim of man. He who has obtained this release goes to the perfect state, *nirvāṇa*.[4]

When it comes to the details of the theory of rebirth and release from it, the Hindu systems are less unanimous, in spite of certain family resemblances. Common to all of them is the doctrine of "karma" or "action, deed," according to which, generally speaking, any action done must have its result, good or bad according to its moral quality, for the doer.[5] It fol-

[1] ii. 13.
[2] ii. 22.
[3] viii. 15.
[4] On which see above, page 23 f.
[5] We shall presently speak of the extent to which this principle is restricted in the teachings of the Gītā.

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

lows from this that in order to get rid of the chain of reincarnation, one must somehow or other be released or excused from the normally inevitable consequences of his actions — even good ones. Otherwise, *any* actions performed must have their fruit in continued existence.

The Gītā itself tells us that, as a consequence of such reasoning, "some wise men say that (all) action is to be abandoned as evil." [6] Such people choose the path of world-renouncing asceticism which has always had such an appeal to the men of India. In order to escape the effects of action, namely continued existence, they propose simply not to act — or to come as near to that ideal as possible. The ascetic life is advocated not only because it approximates a state of inaction and so tends directly to obliterate "karma," but also because withdrawal from the world is a kind of insurance against being entangled in worldly desires, which lead man astray from his true goal, emancipation. There are passages in the Gītā itself which recommend ascetic methods, such as carefully regulating the breath, fixing the eyes on a spot between the eyebrows, avoiding the "external contacts" of the senses with the objects of sense, holding in check the senses, the organ of thought, and the consciousness or will, and so devoting oneself solely to emancipation.[7] Even more explicitly and in greater detail another passage describes the ascetic practices of the "disciplined man." "The disciplined man should ever discipline himself, living alone in a secret place. . . . Arranging for himself in a clean place a steady seat that is neither too high nor too low, and that is covered with a cloth and a skin and *kuśa*-grass, there he should concentrate his mind, restraining the activities of his thoughts and his senses, and taking his place upon the seat should practise discipline unto self-purification. Holding his body, head, and neck even and motionless, he should steadfastly gaze at the tip of his nose and not look to one side or another. Abiding in the vow of chastity, his soul at peace and free from fear, restraining his mind, his thoughts fixed on Me (God), the disciplined man should sit absorbed in Me." [8]

These are not the only passages in which the Gītā uses expressions which suggest a more or less ascetic point of view. Yet such passages are decidedly rare in comparison with those which take the diametrically opposite position that one need not, indeed should not, renounce the world to live the life of a hermit, nor seek to refrain from actions. In general, the Gītā is opposed to asceticism or to renunciation of action as such. I suspect that this has been in large part responsible for its great influence. Altho the ascetic life has always appealed to more people in India, perhaps, than in any other land, still it has never been adopted in practice by more than a small minority. This is inevitable, in the nature of things. Asceticism is too

[6] xviii. 3. [7] v. 27, 28. [8] vi. 10–14.

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

violently opposed to natural human tendencies. The Gītā provides a religious justification for continuing an approximately normal human life. Therein lies its strength. It does not ask the impossible; and yet it furnishes religious inspiration. It holds out the hope of salvation on terms which are not out of the reach of the great mass of mankind. And it provides for its scheme of salvation a philosophic background, based on commonly accepted Hindu postulates.

As far as concerns the doctrine of "karma" or action as a cause of continued existence, the Gītā meets it in a very simple and convincing, and yet extremely clever, way. It reminds us that back of action lies *desire* or *passion* (either positive or negative, that is "love" or "hate"). It is passion that leads to actions, as we are told already in the Upaniṣads (see page 22), and still more emphatically in Buddhism and other classical Hindu systems. It is this that makes men interested in the results of actions. Now, the Gītā maintains that since desire or passion is more fundamental than action, it is desire, rather than action, which is man's enemy, and against which the preacher of religion must contend.[9] This not only seems very reasonable in itself, but it is quite in keeping with the general trend of higher Hindu religions.

But the Gītā is much more clear-cut and definite than most Hindu systems in deducing from this proposition the inference that there is no binding power in action *in itself*. If a man acts unselfishly, without interest in the result, the action has no effect on his fate; it leaves him free. "The wise call him intelligent all whose undertakings are free from desire and purpose, whose actions are consumed in the fire of knowledge. Abandoning attachment to the fruits of action, ever content, independent, he performs (in effect) no act whatsoever even when he sets out to act. Free from wishes, with controlled thoughts and soul, abandoning all possessions, and performing only acts of the body (not acting with the mind; that is, not feeling interest in his actions), he does not incur guilt. Content with getting what comes by chance, superior to the 'pairs' (of opposites, as pain and pleasure, heat and cold, and the like), free from jealousy, indifferent to success or failure, even when he acts he is not bound. Rid of attachment, free, his mind fixed in knowledge, acting only as a religious duty, all his acts are destroyed (that is, have no binding effect)." [10] Therefore one should act without interest in the result of the action, without "desire or hate." *Indifference* is the great desideratum. It is the same as inaction in effect. It guarantees freedom from the binding effect of "karma." "Whoso neither loathes nor desires is to be regarded as having permanently renounced (action). For he who is free from the 'pairs' (of opposites) is easily freed from the bondage (of existence)." [11] "He should not be delighted at attaining pleasure, nor

[9] iii. 34, 37. [10] iv 19–23. [11] v. 3.

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

should he be distressed at attaining pain." [12] He should "hold alike pleasure and pain, gain and loss, victory and defeat." [13]

As I have said, the Gītā goes so far as definitely to oppose the quietistic life. It advises participation in action, in the affairs of life, tho always with an unselfish spirit. "On action alone let thy interest be fixed, never on its fruits. Let not thy motive be the fruits of action; but cleave not to inaction." [14] "Therefore perform ever disinterestedly acts that should be performed. For in performing actions disinterestedly a man attains the highest." [15] "Whoso performs actions that should be performed, without interest in the fruits of action, he is the possessor of renunciation, he the disciplined man, and not he who (merely) abstains from (building the sacrificial) fires and from (ritual) acts." [16] It even goes so far as to hint at insincerity on the part of some renouncers of action, intimating that their thoughts may be more worldly than their actions; altho perhaps all that is intended is to emphasize in the strongest possible way the importance of the mental attitude, rather than of the physical act: "Whoso restrains his organs of action and sits pondering on the objects of sense with his mind, — his soul is deluded; he is called a hypocrite. But whoso restrains his sense-organs with his mind, and with his organs of action engages in discipline-of-action [17] (disciplined action), unattached (to the fruits of action), — he is superior." [18] Harsh penance or self-torture, as practised by some extreme sects of Hindu ascetics, is especially reprobated as doing violence to God, who is within man's person.[19] The true ascetic, according to the Gītā, is he who "renounces" not actions, but selfish interest in actions: "Renunciation of actions due to desires is what the sages hold to be (true) renunciation. Abandonment of the fruits of all actions the wise call (true) abandonment." [20] Moreover, the ascetic position is an impossible one, since *complete* cessation of action is out of the question; he who lives *must* act more or less.[21] God Himself acts, tho of course unselfishly; and of course He cannot be bound by action.[22] Without His action the world would not run; He keeps the universe going and thus sets an example of unselfish action to mankind, and the noble man should follow this example, thus himself setting an example for the common herd.[23] Action is inevitable because it is material nature

[12] v. 20.
[13] ii. 38.
[14] ii. 47.
[15] iii. 19.
[16] vi. 1. On the attitude of the Gītā towards established religion see my tenth chapter.
[17] We shall have more to say of "discipline" in Chapter VIII.
[18] iii. 6, 7.
[19] xvii. 6.
[20] xviii. 2.
[21] iii. 8; xviii. 11.
[22] iii. 20–25, especially 22; iv. 14; ix. 9.
[23] iii. 20 ff.

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

that acts, thru the power of past actions which compel future actions as their result; to seek to oppose the irresistible power of nature is folly.[24] "Not by not undertaking actions does a man attain to freedom from action, and not by mere withdrawal (ascetic renunciation) does he attain perfection. For there is no one whatsoever that remains even a single moment without performing actions. For every man is forced to perform actions willy-nilly, by the strands (the three *guṇas*) that spring from material nature."[25]

But granting that man should perform acts, and should not try to remain inactive, the question still remains, what kind of acts should he perform? Of course, whatever he does should be done in an unselfish spirit, without hope of reward or fear of suffering; but this is not a sufficiently explicit guide in choosing between the manifold possibilities of conduct that lie open to man. The Gītā tells us that "perfect action is called that which is *obligatory*, free from attachment, performed without desire or loathing, by one who does not seek the fruits thereof."[26] "Obligatory" here means, doubtless, required by religious duty; this is supported by some other passages: "Mankind is bound by action, with the exception of action whose object is *religious duty*;[27] perform action for that object, free from attachment (to its fruits)."[28] Religious, charitable, and penitential acts are not binding but "purifying," and should be performed.[29] In other passages, however, "duty" clearly includes acts which cannot possibly, by any stretch, be included in this category. Thus the "duty" of a kṣatriya, a member of the warrior caste, is to fight.[30] This is in keeping with a familiar traditional theory among the Hindus, according to which men have different natural duties according to the caste or station in life in which they are born. The performance of religious rites is the natural duty of brahmans; fighting (also giving of alms, protection of the people, and so forth) is that of warriors or nobles; commerce and husbandry of the vaiśya caste; service, of the śūdra caste, which theoretically consists of serfs. The Gītā accepts this theory, and even devotes several stanzas[31] to a definite statement of it, naive and primitive as it seems to us.[32] It says that a man should perform his own

[24] xviii. 60; iii. 33.

[25] iii. 4, 5.

[26] xviii. 23.

[27] The word here used means "worship," or more literally "sacrifice"; but it is used in the Gītā in a way which seems to include by extension any kind of duty enjoined by religion.

[28] iii. 9; cf. iv. 23, "if one acts for religious duty, all his acts are wiped out."

[29] xviii. 3, 5, 6.

[30] ii. 31.

[31] xviii. 41–44.

[32] As naive and primitive, let us say, as the theory that it is the natural duty of one man to work ten hours in a steel-mill, and that of another to spend five or six hours in a New York office managing the financial affairs of that mill and others.

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

native duty, that is, the duty which comes to him by birth, from the caste or station to which he belongs, "to which it has pleased God to call him," "even tho this duty be imperfect," rather than attempt a duty that pertains to another social group.[33] Again, with a different turn, man is told to do the things that are commanded of God, throwing the responsibility on Him, and not seeking to question His wisdom. By so doing, man is freed from the bondage of "karma." [34] It is sinful pride to refuse to obey God's commands, thinking that you know better than God.[35] We may see in these various discussions of "duty," as either innate in the social order or founded on divine commands, groping attempts to formulate definite answers to the very natural question, what concrete acts does "duty" require of man? But it is hardly possible to conceal the unsatisfactory nature of the Gītā's conclusions on this point. The writer, at least, cannot blame Arjuna for inquiring: "If thou holdest the attitude of mind to be more important than action, then why dost thou enjoin me to do this savage deed, O Kṛṣṇa?" [36] Why, indeed, should one fight and slay, even "unselfishly"? This eminently reasonable question is shamelessly dodged by Kṛṣṇa; no real answer is given — perhaps because none can be given.[37] And more often the Gītā attempts no concrete definition of duty, but contents itself with saying that man should do his duty simply because it *is* his duty, and with perfect indifference to the results — reminding us of Kant's categorical imperative.

We must, however, refer to another attempt to define duty which the Gītā repeatedly presents, and which not only furnishes a very high ethical standard, but is a logical deduction from the best Hindu metaphysics. If God is in all beings, if the soul or real self of all beings is One, it follows that "The wise look alike upon a learned and cultivated brahman, a (sacred) cow, an elephant, a dog, and an outcaste." [38] All beings are one in God;

[33] iii. 35; xviii. 45–48.

[34] iii. 30–32.

[35] xviii. 58, 59.

[36] iii. 1.

[37] I have tried to put the best possible light on the Gītā's teachings in this regard, and have ignored for this purpose certain verses in which the "duty" to fight is enjoined upon Arjuna on still lower grounds, as on the ground that he will be suspected of cowardice if he withdraws from the battle, and so will be despised of men (ii. 34 ff.; contrast xiv. 24, which says one must be indifferent to praise and blame), or even on the ground that if he is slain he will gain heaven (alluding to the popular Hindu belief in a sort of Valhalla for warriors slain in battle), while if he conquers he will enjoy rule over earth (ii. 37). These intrusions of popular ideas, while certainly unworthy of the philosophic standard of most of the Gītā, need not be considered interpolations. They simply illustrate the fact to which I have often alluded, that the Gītā is not a logical or systematic philosophical treatise, but a poem, containing many inconsistencies in ethical as well as metaphysical notions.

[38] v. 18. Dogs are very unclean animals in India.

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

by true knowledge "thou shalt see all beings without exception in thyself, and in Me." [39] "He whose soul is disciplined in discipline, seeing the same in all things, perceives himself in all beings, and all beings in himself," [40] and "Me (God) in all and all in Me." [41] Accordingly one should behave in the same way towards friend and foe, kinsman and stranger, good men and bad;[42] namely, towards all as one would towards oneself. "Whoso looks upon all beings in the same way as upon himself, and sees likeness in all, whether it be pleasure or pain, he is deemed the supreme *yogin* (disciplined man)." [43] Those who are completely pervaded by the awareness of this truth, who feel that all beings are the same as themselves, that all as well as themselves are one with God, are freed from the effects of action and from rebirth; for they, of course, will not "injure themselves (in others) by themselves"; [44] they "identify their own selves with the selves of all creatures, and even when they act are not affected ('stained') thereby." [45] "Even in this world, rebirth is overcome by those whose minds are fixed in indifference (the consciousness of sameness). For Brahman is flawless and alike (the same, in all creatures). Therefore such men are fixed in Brahman." [46] "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" — because thy neighbor *is* thyself; God is in both thee and thy neighbor, and both are in God. He who acts in this spirit need not fear that his acts will bind him to further existence.[47]

[39] iv. 35.
[40] vi. 29.
[41] vi. 30.
[42] vi. 9.
[43] vi. 32.
[44] xiii. 28.
[45] v. 7.
[46] v. 19.
[47] Compare Chapter XI.

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

CHAPTER VIII

The Way of Knowledge and the Way of Disciplined Activity

The dispute between those who held that all actions were binding, that is, involved man in continued existence, and those who maintained that acts performed with "indifference" to the results had no such effect, appears to have been only one aspect of a broader difference of opinion. So far we have spoken of what we have called the ascetic position as if it were a purely negative doctrine, teaching merely that man shall be saved by abstention from actions. But we learn from the Gītā that the school of thought against which its arguments on this subject are chiefly directed had a much more important positive theory of salvation, which is strictly in accord with the most fundamental principles of Hindu speculation from the Upaniṣads (and even before them) onward, and to which the Gītā itself feels forced to admit a considerable validity. This positive theory was no other than the "way of knowledge" which we met in Upaniṣadic thought, and which we traced back to its origins in the earliest Vedic speculations; the theory that by perfect knowledge man can control his destiny; that "the truth shall make" him "free."

So ingrained in Hindu culture is this belief in the power of supreme esoteric knowledge that probably no Hindu system would venture to deny it. The Gītā certainly does not. In many verses it recognizes it as explicitly as possible. "Even if thou shouldst be the worst of all sinners, merely by the boat of knowledge thou shalt cross over all (the 'sea' of) evil." [1] "As a kindled fire burns firewood to ashes, so the fire of knowledge burns all deeds to ashes," [2] that is, frees man from rebirth, the effect of deeds. Doubt, the opposite of knowledge, is fatal; the ignorant doubter cannot hope for bliss.[3] Man must "cut doubt with the sword of knowledge." [4] Knowledge is better than mere ritual religion: "Better than material sacrifice is the sacrifice (that consists) of knowledge. All action (karma) without remainder is completely ended in knowledge." [5] What knowledge? The knowledge of the supreme religious truth which each system professes to teach. Thus in the Gītā it is most often knowledge of God. Whosoever knows the mystic truth of God's nature is freed from rebirth and goes to God.[6] But elsewhere it is, for instance, the knowledge of the absolute separateness of soul and

[1] iv. 36.
[2] iv. 37.
[3] iv. 40.
[4] iv. 41, 42.
[5] iv. 33.
[6] iv. 9, 10; vii. 19; x. 3; xiv. 1 ff.

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

body, the independence of the soul from the body and all its acts and qualities, which brings release from rebirth.[7] In fact, the Gītā, like the Upaniṣads, tends to promise complete emancipation to one who "knows" any particularly profound religious or philosophic truth which it sets forth. This seems to have been characteristic of Hindu systems generally, at least in their early stages.

While different thinkers differed in their formulations of the supreme truth, by knowing which man should gain salvation, it appears that another and perhaps a more important difference, from the practical standpoint, was in their doctrines of method, or in the varying degrees of emphasis laid on various possible methods, for attaining enlightenment. The Gītā refers several times to such differences of method. In one passage it tells us that "some by *meditation* come to behold the Self (Soul, *ātman*) in the self by the self; others by the Sāṃkhya discipline, and others by the discipline of Action. But others, while not having this knowledge, hear it from others and devote themselves to it; even they too cross over death, by devoting themselves to what is revealed."[8] According to this, true knowledge — here spoken of as knowledge of the *ātman*, the Self or Soul (the context indicates that the author is thinking of the individual soul, as distinguished from matter, rather than of the universal soul) — may be gained in various ways: first, by inner meditation; then, by what is called the Sāṃkhya discipline, and by the "discipline of action"; and fourthly, by instruction from others, if one cannot attain to it by himself. All these methods are possible; all lead to salvation, to "crossing over death," which implies also escape from rebirth, since rebirth leads to redeath.

It is necessary to consider what the author means by the "Sāṃkhya discipline" and the "discipline of action." These are technical terms, which require very careful definition. The word which I translate "discipline" is *yoga*. The phrase "discipline of action" renders a Sanskrit compound, *karma-yoga*. Elsewhere the word *yoga* alone is used in the sense of *karma-yoga*; that is, "discipline," when otherwise undefined, means in the Gītā frequently (and indeed usually) the "discipline of action." The word *yoga* is unfortunately a very fluid one, used in a great variety of senses; this makes it often hard to give an exact definition of its meaning in any given occurrence. It may mean simply "method, means." It also means "exertion, diligence, zeal." And especially it is used to describe a regular, disciplined course of *action* leading to a definite end; in the Gītā and works of its type, to the end of emancipation. In some contemporary works it connotes a system of ascetic practices culminating in a sort of self-hypnosis, conceived as leading to emancipation, or to some supernatural attainment. When

[7] v. 16, 17 (cf. the preceding verses); xiv. 22–25.

[8] xiii. 24, 25.

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

used alone, without qualifying epithet, it always denotes, in works of the time of the Gītā, a *practical* method, as distinguished from an *intellectual* method. But in the Gītā its meaning is narrowed down. Here it means the method of salvation which is characterized by participation in normal, worldly action (hence the fuller expression *karma-yoga*, which is synonymous with *yoga* alone in this sense) without interest in the fruits of action. Action characterized by indifference is the central principle. "Yoga is defined as Indifference," says one verse.[9] But it is always an indifference *in action*. The word *yoga* definitely implies *activity*, as it is used in this connection in the Gītā, where it is constantly colored by (often unformulated) association with the other meaning of the word, "energetic performance, exertion." It is then opposed to the system or "rule" or "discipline" (the same word *yoga* is also used, confusingly) of the Sāṃkhya, which is elsewhere called the *jñāna-yoga* or "discipline of *knowledge*": "In this world a two-fold foundation (of religion) has been expounded by Me of old; by the discipline (or, method) of knowledge of the followers of Sāṃkhya, and by the discipline (or, method) of action of the followers of Yoga." [10]

The word *sāṃkhya* seems to mean "based on calculation"; that is, "philosophical, reflective, speculative method." [11] The adherents of this method believed in knowledge as the supreme and exclusive means of salvation, and in particular, according to the Gītā, they favored renunciation of all "works," of all activities. In the verses just following the one last quoted,[12] the Gītā's author argues against the policy of ascetic renunciation, clearly indicating that he is opposing the doctrine of the Sāṃkhya. In another passage *saṃnyāsa*, a regular term for ascetic renunciation, is contrasted with *karma-yoga*, "discipline of action," and in the next verse but one the same contrast is expressed by the terms *sāṃkhya* and *yoga*.[13] Further light as to the doctrines of the "Sāṃkhya" school is furnished by a passage in which a dissertation on the complete distinction between the soul and the body (see Chapter V) is followed by this verse: "This (preceding) is the point of view set forth in the Sāṃkhya; but hear now this (point of view set forth) in the Yoga." [14]

[9] ii. 48. [10] iii. 3.

[11] Another theory is that it means "dealing with numbers," because the (later) system called by this name was characterized by many enumerated categories. Tho this interpretation is accepted by many distinguished scholars, it seems to me erroneous. See my article on "The meaning of *sāṃkhya* and *yoga*," *American Journal of Philology*, 45 (1924), 1 ff.; for the literal meaning of *sāṃkhya*, 35 ff.

[12] iii. 4 ff. [13] v. 2, 4.

[14] ii. 39. The preceding passage referred to is the discussion summed up in ii. 30; there intervene a number of verses which are parenthetical and may possibly be a later interpolation, dealing with wholly unrelated matters. Practically all the rest of the Chapter (vss. 47–72) is devoted to explaining the doctrine of *yoga*, namely, indifference in action (cf. especially ii. 47, 48).

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

The "knowledge" which the Sāṃkhya taught, therefore, was or included the dualistic doctrine (familiarly accepted in the Gītā) that soul and body are two eternally separate entities.[15]

We have seen that many passages in the Gītā fully recognize the value of knowledge as a means of salvation. We have also found in various connections that the Gītā is very catholic and tolerant; that it is much inclined to admit validity to different points of view. We need not, therefore, be surprised to learn that in several places it definitely recognizes both the Sāṃkhya and the Yoga methods as effective. It even asserts that they are really one at bottom; which is simply another way of saying the same thing, that they both lead to salvation. "Fools say that Sāṃkhya and Yoga are different, not the wise. One who devotes himself only to one of these two obtains completely the fruit of both. The station that is obtained by the followers of Sāṃkhya is also reached by the followers of Yoga Whoso looks upon Sāṃkhya and Yoga as one has true vision." [16] "Renunciation (of action; that is, the 'way of knowledge' or the Sāṃkhya way) and discipline of action (*karma-yoga*; that is, the Yoga way) both lead to supreme weal." [17]

Yet the same verse of which I have just quoted a part goes on to say: "But of these two, discipline of action (*karma-yoga*) is better than renunciation of action (*karma-saṃnyāsa*)." And the reason, which is given a few verses later, is very interesting. "Renunciation, however, without discipline (*yoga*), is hard to attain. The sage who is disciplined in discipline quickly (easily) goes to Brahman." [18] Again, as above on page 48 f., we find the Gītā looking for the "easy way" to salvation, trying to meet the "man-in-the-street" half-way. It allows validity to the severe, more toilsome path of pure knowledge with ascetic renunciation of all activities. But few can travel that road. The Gītā appeals to the masses; that is why it has always

[15] I have felt it necessary to go into this matter somewhat technically because of the confusingly various ways in which these terms are used, and because of the further confusing fact that these same terms, Sāṃkhya and Yoga, are later applied to two systems of philosophy which have found many adherents in India but which I think did not exist in codified forms at the time of the Gītā. The later Sāṃkhya system is commonly said to be atheistic; and indeed some (by no means all!) of its adherents deny the existence of any World-soul or God. But there is no suggestion of such a view in the "Sāṃkhya" of the time of the Gītā (in my opinion; the contrary has been maintained, but I think wrongly). The later use of the term "Yoga" develops out of another sort of "practical activity" than that indicated by the Gītā as "Yoga." Professor Dasgupta in his *History of Indian Philosophy* (II. 455) rightly defines Sāṃkhya in the Gītā as "the path of knowledge," and (II. 476) sees that it does not mean "the traditional [later] Sāṃkhya philosophy." He comes fairly close to agreeing with my view of Sāṃkhya (apparently without knowing my article mentioned in note 11 above). I regret to say that I think he is utterly wrong on Yoga.

[16] v. 4, 5.

[17] v. 2.

[18] v. 6.

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

had so many followers. It claims that all the results which accrue to the follower of the strict intellectual method may also be obtained without withdrawing from action. Nay, it claims that even knowledge itself — the direct aim of the intellectual school — may be obtained thru disciplined activity: "For there is no purifier in the world like knowledge. He who is perfected in discipline (*yoga*) in due time finds it (knowledge) in himself." [19] From this point of view we may regard Yoga, disciplined activity, as an auxiliary means, useful in gaining the knowledge that shall bring release, just as devotion to God is elsewhere regarded in the same light.[20] This supports the thesis which I set forth in Chapter III,[21] that in Hindu speculation generally knowledge is to be regarded as the primary means of salvation, and all other methods are in origin secondary helps to the gaining of knowledge, however much they may come to overshadow the original aim.

In the Gītā, then, we find that the way of disciplined activity (*yoga*) is constantly favored at the expense of the way of knowledge and inactivity (*sāṃkhya*), despite the statements quoted above to the effect that either one is good enough as a means of salvation. Discipline and the practiser of discipline (the *yogin* or "possessor of *yoga*," or the *yukta*, "disciplined man") are constantly praised and exalted. "The disciplined man, renouncing the fruit of action, gains final blessedness. The undisciplined, because he acts wilfully (or, according to his lusts), being attached to the fruits (of action), is bound." [22] If one practises this sort of disciplined activity even imperfectly, that is, without completely realizing it in life, still the effect of it is not lost but continues in future births, bringing man ever nearer and nearer to full attainment, until at last, by perfection in discipline, salvation is gained.[23] Disciplined activity is superior not only to the "way of knowledge" but also to asceticism and to orthodox ritual religion: "The disciplined man (*yogin*, 'possessor of discipline') is superior to ascetics, and to the devotees of knowledge he is also considered superior, and to the devotees of (ritual) works he is superior; therefore be disciplined, O Arjuna." [24] It is significant, however, that "love of God" is *not* subordinated to disciplined activity in this list. On the contrary, the very next verse [25] adds that "the most perfectly disciplined man (*yuktatama*) is he who worships Me." In the next chapter we shall take up the method of devotion to God.

Readers may fairly ask for a more exact definition of what is meant by this "disciplined activity," this *yoga*. The Gītā does not fail to furnish it. It is implied by what has been said in this chapter and the preceding one. It consists in doing unselfishly whatever action seems to be required in any

[19] iv. 38.
[20] See page 71 f. below.
[21] Pages 25 ff.
[22] v. 12.
[23] vi. 37–45.
[24] vi. 46.
[25] vi. 47.

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

given circumstances; taking no interest in the results of the action to the doer, but not seeking to evade responsibility by refusing to act at all. The state of *yoga* is identified with "equanimity, stability of mind." It is described especially in a long passage in the second chapter of the Gītā, of which I quote selections here:[26] "Perform actions abiding in discipline, abandoning attachment (to the results), and being indifferent to success or failure; discipline is defined as indifference. For (mere) action is far inferior to discipline of mental attitude. Seek salvation in the mental attitude; wretched are those whose motive is the fruit (of action). He who is disciplined in mind leaves behind him in this life (the effects of) good and bad deeds alike. Therefore practise discipline; discipline in actions brings welfare. For the wise men that are disciplined in mind and abandon the fruits of action are freed from the bonds of rebirth and go to perfect bliss. . . . When one abandons all the desires of the mind and finds contentment by himself in his Self alone, then he is said to have 'stability of mind' (equanimity; synonym for 'discipline'). He whose mind is unperturbed by sorrow and without desire for pleasure, free from longing, fear, and wrath, is called a stable-minded holy man. He who has no desire towards anything, who getting this or that good or evil neither rejoices nor repines, his mind is stabilized. . . . For even the mind of an intelligent and earnestly striving man is violently carried away by the impetuous senses. Restraining them all he should abide in discipline, devoted to Me; for he whose senses are under control has a stabilized mind. . . . The man who abandons all desires and acts without longing, without self-interest and egotism, goes to peace."

In other passages special emphasis is laid on the meaning of the phrase "when one abandons all the desires of the mind and finds satisfaction by himself in his Self alone." What is meant is of course very different from what we mean by "selfishness." The idea is that internal joys are the only true ones; external joys, that is, those which result from the senses thru external stimulants, are both transitory and illusory. "With soul unattached to outside contacts, when he finds joy in the Self, his soul disciplined with the discipline of (i.e., that leads to) Brahman, he attains eternal bliss. For the enjoyments that spring from (outside) contacts are nothing but sources of misery; they are transitory (literally, 'they have beginning and end'); the wise man finds no pleasure in them. He who even in this life, before being freed from the body, can control the excitement that springs from desire and wrath, he is disciplined, he is blessed. Whoso finds his joy, his delight, and his illumination *within*, he, the disciplined, becomes Brahman, and goes to the *nirvāṇa* of (or, that is) Brahman."[27] "In which (state of *yoga*,

[26] ii. 48–72. The word "discipline" in my translation always renders *yoga*, and "disciplined" renders the corresponding participle *yukta*.

[27] v. 21–24.

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

discipline) the thought comes to rest, held in check by the practice of discipline, and in which, contemplating the Self by the Self, one finds satisfaction in the Self; in which he experiences that infinite bliss which is to be gṛasped (only) by the consciousness and is beyond the senses, and in which firmly established he cannot be moved from the truth; having gained which he realizes that there is no greater gain than it; established in which he is not moved by any sorrow, however great; he shall know this remover of all contacts with sorrow that is known as Yoga. This Yoga (discipline) should be practised with determination, with heart undismayed." [28] "But the man who finds his delight only in the Self, and his contentment and satisfaction only in the Self, for him there is (in effect) no action to be done. He can have no interest whatever in action done nor yet in action not done in this world, nor has he any dependence of interest in all beings (that is, he cannot be affected for either better or worse by anything from outside of himself)." [29]

Of particular interest is one verse which speaks of *moderation* in all things as a characteristic of the "disciplined" follower of *yoga*: "There is no discipline in him who eats too much, not yet in him who fasts completely; neither in him who indulges in too much sleep, nor yet in him who sleeps not at all." [30] This very pointedly emphasizes the opposition of the policy of "discipline" to that of asceticism, which was characterized by long-continued fasts, sometimes to the point of self-starvation, and by other extreme practices. This is one of the points of contact between the Gītā and Buddhism, for Buddhism too makes much of the doctrine of the "golden mean," opposing the extreme of self-torture as well as the extreme of worldliness.[31]

In closing this chapter I wish to reaffirm the fact that, in spite of occasional disparagements of the "way of knowledge," the Gītā's doctrine of disciplined activity really has an intellectual basis. The reason for acting with indifference is that actions cannot really affect the soul for good or ill; they concern matter exclusively. He who *knows* this will be steadfast in *yoga*, in indifference. This is brought out with admirable clarity in the last passage which I shall quote in describing the disciplined man: "As to both illumination and activity and delusion,[32] he neither loathes them when they appear nor longs for them when they have vanished (that is, he is indifferent to all

[28] vi. 20–23.
[29] iii. 17, 18.
[30] vi. 16.
[31] Similar expressions occur, to be sure, in late texts of the (later, systematic) "yoga" philosophy; and this point has been taken as an indication of interrelationship between the latter and Buddhism. See Oldenberg, *Upanishaden und Buddhismus*, 1st ed., p. 327; 2d ed., p. 282.
[32] These are the characteristic marks of the three "strands" of material nature, *sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas*; see page 39.

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

material things). Taking part (in actions) as a disinterested participant, he is not perturbed by the (three) strands (of matter); he stands firm and unmoved in the thought that it is only the strands that are active. He is indifferent to pain and pleasure, and self-contained; clods of earth, stones, and gold are all one to him, pleasant and unpleasant things alike; he is wise (or, steadfast), and careless of praise or blame. Unmoved by honor or dishonor, alike to friend and foe, renouncing all enterprises, he is declared to have transcended the strands (of matter)." [33] In so far as the Gītā quarrels with what it calls the Sāṃkhya school, it is really not so much on the question of the power of knowledge, nor on the definition of what true knowledge is. It is rather because of the policy of complete abstention from actions which the Gītā attributes to the followers of Sāṃkhya. This is directly opposed to the doctrine of activity with indifference, which the Gītā usually preaches with all possible force — altho, as we saw in the last chapter, it contains passages which are inconsistent even with this.

[33] xiv. 22–25.

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

CHAPTER IX

The Way of Devotion to God

It has required something like a *tour de force* to reserve for this place a treatment of the relation of God to human salvation in the teachings of the Gītā. For in a sense it has involved temporarily ignoring the most cardinal doctrine of the poem. Yet the poem itself affords a precedent for approximately such an arrangement. The Gītā does not begin with this subject; and references to it in the early chapters are few and scattering. In the middle chapters of the work it gradually becomes more prominent, until it finally occupies the center of the stage, with the climax in the eleventh chapter, in which the mystic vision of God's supernal form is revealed to Arjuna.[1] After this, somewhat anti-climactically, the Gītā gradually drops into other themes again, to return to the theme of salvation thru God towards the end of its final, summary chapter (the eighteenth).

But in spite of our best efforts it has proved impossible to avoid some anticipation of this theme in the preceding chapters. In fact, with all the mixture of discordant theories which the Gītā contains, it is nevertheless so prevalently and devoutly theistic that its theism colors many of its expressions on other themes. So the various schemes of salvation, largely inherited from Upaniṣadic speculation, are reinterpreted in the Gītā in terms of its personal theism. The Upaniṣads taught that "knowledge" of the First Principle of the universe would lead to salvation. But the First Principle of the universe is God, declares the Gītā. It follows that knowledge of God is what brings salvation.[2] Freedom from rebirth comes from attainment — not of an impersonal First Principle, but — of God.[3]

Knowledge, however, whether of Brahman or of a personal God, is "hard to attain," as we have seen.[4] The difficulties of the intellectual method are emphasized in many places in the Gītā. Easier for the most of mankind is a more emotional scheme of salvation. This is what the Gītā furnishes by its famous doctrine of *bhakti*, "devotion" or "love of God." Tho not en-

[1] Page 53 f.
[2] Page 62.
[3] viii. 15, 16 etc.
[4] "Among thousands of men perhaps one strives for perfection. Even of those who strive and perfect themselves, rarely does one know Me in very truth." (vii. 3) "Hard to find is the noble soul who knows that Vāsudeva (a name for Kṛṣṇa = God) is all." (vii. 19) But: "Whoso always reveres Me with thoughts ever straying to no other object, for him I am easy to attain." (viii. 14)

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

tirely unknown to the Upaniṣads,[5] it is almost a new note in Hindu religious speculation. No doubt it originated in more popular forms of religion, which have left no written records. In the nature of things it could hardly be found, or at least could hardly be prominent, except in theistic religions. For "devotion" or "love" can hardly be felt except for a divine *personality*. That is why it is practically absent from the older forms of Hindu philosophic religion which are known to us.[6] Their divine principles were too impersonal. But we have good reason to believe that side by side with these abstract speculations there had long existed popular cults which worshiped various local gods and heroes; the Kṛṣṇa of the Bhagavad Gītā evidently originated as such a local deity. And it may fairly be taken for granted that in many or most of these cults devoted love of the god on the part of his worshipers, and perhaps vice versa, had played a considerable role.[7]

We have already seen that the Gītā's religion is a compromise between the speculation of the intellectuals and the emotionalism of popular religion. So the notion of *bhakti*, devotion, enters into its scheme of salvation by a side door, without at first displacing the old intellectual theory of salvation by knowledge. At least it is rationalized in this way. It is represented that by devoted love of God one can attain knowledge (of God), and so *indirectly* the salvation which comes thru this knowledge: "By devotion one comes to know Me, what My measure is and what I am in very truth; then, knowing Me in very truth, he straightway enters into Me." [8] So after the mystic revelation of his true form to Arjuna, Kṛṣṇa declares that such a revelation can come to a man thru no other means than devoted love: "But by unswerving devotion it is possible to know Me in this form, Arjuna, and to behold Me in very truth, and (so) to enter into Me." [9] Thus it is possible logically to reconcile the theory of devotion with the theory so often expressed that knowledge of God is what brings man to union with Him, that is, to salvation. Devotion to God is an auxiliary means of gaining knowledge of Him. It is significant that one of the Upaniṣad passages which men-

[5] See page 26 f.

[6] In the polytheism of the Rig Veda we do, indeed, find some traces of a relationship of love and trust between man and his gods, particularly as concerns the god Agni, the divine fire, who is found in every man's house and is "the friend of man." There is a wide gap, however, both in time and in spirit, between this and the "devotion" of the Bhagavad Gītā.

[7] The striking correspondence in externals between the Gītā's *bhakti* and the Christian love of God led some, in earlier days, to believe that the Gītā had borrowed the notion from Christianity. The correspondence is interesting, but it certainly does not justify such a theory. Undoubtedly, the two religions developed independently. The Gītā is now known to be almost certainly pre-Christian in date.

[8] xviii. 55.

[9] xi. 54.

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

tion the method of "devotion" speaks of it in the same way, as a means of getting knowledge.[10]

But not for long — if ever consistently — was the way of devotion subordinated to the way of knowledge. Usually the Gītā speaks of devotion as the immediate and all-sufficient way to final union with God. "Fix thy mind and devotion on Me; worship Me and revere Me. Thou shalt come even to Me by thus disciplining thy soul in full devotion to Me." [11] "Fix thy thought-organ on Me alone, let thy consciousness sink in Me, and thou shalt come to dwell even in Me hereafter; of that there is no doubt." [12] Even wicked men quickly become righteous and attain salvation thru devotion to God; even low-caste men, and women (who are a low grade of creatures), may be saved in the same way; "no devotee of God is lost." [13]

This quasi-miraculous salvation thru devotion is frequently represented as due to special divine intervention on behalf of the devotee. God, as it were, cancels the laws of nature for the benefit of his devoted worshipers, and brings them to salvation by divine grace. "But those who, laying all actions upon Me, intent on Me, meditate on Me and revere Me with utterly unswerving devotion, for them I speedily become the Savior from the ocean of the round of (rebirths and) deaths, because their thoughts are fixed on Me." [14] Therefore one should "abandon all (other) duties (or, religious practices or systems)" and make God his sole refuge; then "I will save thee from all evils; be not grieved!" [15] In another passage it is explained differently; God is represented as impartial to all men, having no favorites, but still the devotee is, by reason of his devotion, united with God: "I am alike to all beings; none is either hated or loved of Me. But those who revere Me with devotion — they are in Me and I too am in them." [16]

Even "discipline" (*yoga*), of which so much was said in the last chapter as a favorite way of salvation, is granted to the devotee by God. This again seems to suggest that devotion is not the immediate way to salvation, but a help towards it, in that it assists the devotee along the way — the way being here not the way of knowledge but that of "discipline." "To those ever-disciplined ones that revere Me lovingly, I grant the discipline of mind whereby they come unto Me." [17] In the very next verse God grants the light of *knowledge* to the devotee: "To show compassion to these same ones I, while remaining in My own true state, dispel their darkness that is born of ignorance by the shining light of knowledge." [18] All this simply amounts to saying that devotion is the way *par excellence* — that it is the key-road,

[10] See page 27.
[11] ix. 34.
[12] xii. 8; similarly viii. 7; xi. 55.
[13] ix. 30–32.
[14] xii. 6, 7.
[15] xviii. 66; cf. ix. 22.
[16] ix. 29.
[17] x. 10.
[18] x. 11.

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

which controls all other roads to salvation. The passage quoted at the end of the last chapter, describing the man who is perfectly disciplined and whose discipline is founded on true knowledge, is followed by this: "And he who serves Me with the unswerving discipline of *devotion*, transcends these strands (of matter) and is fit for becoming Brahman (that is, for emancipation)." [19] The way of knowledge and the way of disciplined activity are allowed their place; but the way of devotion controls them. Similarly after a passage [20] which sets forth the ascetic position, there is added the recommendation that the ascetic should fix his thoughts on God; by so doing he shall attain "the peace that culminates in *nirvāṇa*, and that rests in Me." [21] We referred above to the significant fact that in a passage glorifying "discipline" (*yoga*), the disciplined man is declared to be superior to ascetics, to followers of the path of knowledge, and to those who adhere to the rites of orthodox religion, but not to adherents of the method of devotion to God; on the contrary, "the most perfectly disciplined man is he who devoutly reveres Me, with his soul fixed on Me." [22] In one passage, which is curiously typical of the catholic or eclectic attitude which we have repeatedly noticed as characteristic of the Gītā, we are given to understand that God may be reached (and this implies complete emancipation) in several ways. First, we are commanded to sink our hearts completely in loving devotion to God. "However, if thou canst not fix thy thoughts steadfastly on Me, then seek to win Me by discipline of practice (that is, by what is elsewhere called simply *yoga*, 'disciplined activity'). If incapable even of practice, be wholly devoted to work for Me; by performing actions for My sake (as described in the next paragraph) thou shalt also win perfection. But if thou art unable even to do this, resorting to My discipline then make abandonment of all fruits of action (that is, act unselfishly, as set forth in Chapter VII), controlling thyself." [23] The way of devotion is the favorite one to the author of the Gītā; but he admits the validity of other ways too, if for personal reasons a man finds them preferable. Still oftener, all these various ways are more or less vaguely blended and felt as in the last analysis essentially one; but the devotional coloring is perhaps the most constant characteristic of the blend.

As indicated in the last quotation, the attitude of devotion to God has an important bearing on the question of action and its results under the doctrine of karma, discussed in my seventh chapter. Not only does duty require that one should do the commands of God,[24] but a sure way to escape any of the normal results of action, in continued rebirth, is to "do all as a gift to God" or to "resign all actions to God"; that is, to throw upon Him

[19] xiv. 26.
[20] Quoted above, page 56 f.
[21] vi. 15.
[22] vi. 47; see page 66.
[23] xii. 9–11.
[24] iii. 30–32.

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

all responsibility for actions; if one acts only in a spirit of loving devotion to God and of trust in Him, relying upon Him to settle the matter, He will save the devotee from the effects of action; that is, from further rebirth. "Whatever thou doest, whatever thou eatest, whatever thou offerest (in oblation), whatever thou givest, whatever austerity thou performest, that do as a gift to Me. Thus thou shalt be freed from the bonds of action with its fruits, whether good or evil; thy soul shall be disciplined in the discipline of renunciation, and thou shalt be freed and shalt attain unto Me." [25] Let a man perform his own natural duty [26] as a service to God: "A man finds perfection in worshiping Him from whom comes the activity (or, origin) of all beings, by whom this universe is pervaded — *by doing action appropriate to himself.*" [27] "Taking refuge in Me, tho ever performing all acts, by My grace a man attains the eternal, undying station. Casting mentally all acts upon Me, devoted to Me, cleaving to discipline of mind, keep thy thoughts ever fixed on Me." [28] "Thinking on Me, by My grace thou shalt cross over all difficulties"; refusal to do so would be a sign of pride and self-conceit, an indication that man thinks he knows more than God; such a man would perish; and he could not, after all, avoid the acts to which his nature impels him; "material nature will coerce" him.[29] Nor need man fear that anything done in true, loving devotion to God will be ignored by Him. God accepts the humblest offering of His devotees, taking it in the spirit in which it is meant: "If a man offers Me with devotion (*bhakti*) a leaf, a flower, a fruit, or a sip of water — that loving gift of My devotee I accept (literally, I eat)." [30]

It is specially important that one should fix his mind on God at the time of death. According to a familiar belief among the Hindus, the attitude of mind at the hour of death is particularly influential in determining man's state after death.[31] The following verse of the Gītā expresses the traditionally accepted view: "Whatever condition of being one meditates on as he leaves the body at death, precisely to that condition he goes, his whole nature being infused therewith." [32] That is why to this day all pious Hindus

[25] ix. 27–28.
[26] Cf. page 59.
[27] xviii. 46.
[28] xviii. 56, 57.
[29] xviii. 58, 59.
[30] ix. 26.

[31] Indeed, according to the Gītā (viii. 23–27), the time of death is so important in determining man's future fate, that the "disciplined man" and "knower of Brahman" attains freedom from rebirth if he dies at a favorable time, but is reborn again if he dies at an unfavorable time. Favorable times are "fire, light, day, the bright half of the lunar month (when the moon is waxing), the six months during which the sun moves northward." Their opposites are unfavorable. There are interesting parallels in Christian and Jewish ideas on the importance of the "hour of death"; see Edgerton, "The Hour of Death," *Annals of the Bhandarkar Institute* (Poona), 8. 219 ff.

[32] viii. 6.

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

meditate on their respective sectarian deities, and recite their sacred mantras or holy formulas, at the hour of death, hoping thereby to gain salvation. Accordingly the Gītā does not hesitate to promise this result to one who meditates on God at death: "He who at the hour of his death passes out and leaves his body while meditating on Me alone, goes to My estate; of this there is no doubt." [33] "(Whosoever thinks on God) at the time of his death with unswerving mind, disciplined (*yukta*) in devotion (*bhakti*) and in the power of discipline (*yoga*) too, making his breath to pass wholly into the space between his eyebrows, he goes to that supreme, divine Spirit (*puruṣa*). . . . Pronouncing the single (sacred) syllable Om (which is) Brahman, thinking upon Me, he who (thus) leaves the body and dies goes to the highest goal." [34]

The characteristics of the perfect devotee of God are very much like those attributed to the possessor of "discipline" as described in the last chapter. Indeed, the two are really one. The true possessor of "discipline" will be devoted to God; devotion to God involves or brings with it perfection in discipline. Perhaps the note of joy, of bliss, is more definitely present in descriptions of the devotee than of the "disciplined" man. "Those whose thoughts and lives are centered upon Me, who are ever enlightening one another and telling about Me (giving 'testimony,' as some Christian sects say), are filled with joy and contentment." [35] The true devotee is described in the following passage: "Not hostile to all creatures, friendly and compassionate, unselfish and without egotism, indifferent to pain and pleasure, patient, contented, ever disciplined, self controlled, of firm resolve; he who is devoted to Me and has fixed his mind and consciousness upon Me, is dear to Me. Before whom people do not tremble and who does not tremble before people, who is free from the excitement of joy, impatience, fear, and agitation, he too is dear to Me. Unconcerned, pure, capable, disinterested, imperturbable, abandoning all undertakings, — such a devotee of Mine is dear to Me. Who neither delights nor loathes, neither grieves nor craves, who renounces pleasant and unpleasant objects, and is full of devotion, he is dear to Me. Who is the same to friend and foe, indifferent to honor and disgrace, to heat and cold, to joy amd sorrow, who has abandoned all attachment, to whom praise and blame are all one, restrained in speech, content with whatsoever (his lot may be), having no fixed habitation, of steadfast mind, full of devotion, he is dear to Me. But those devotees of Mine who believe and accept this nectar of religious doctrine as I have expressed it (in the Bhagavad Gītā), intent on Me, they are beyond measure dear to Me." [36]

[33] viii. 5.
[34] viii. 10, 13.
[35] x. 9.
[36] xii. 13–20.

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

The very heart, the quintessence, of the doctrines of the Gītā is declared by Hindu commentators to be found in this verse:[37] "He who does My work, who is devoted to Me and loves Me, who is free from attachment (to worldly things) and from enmity to all beings, goes to Me, Son of Pāṇḍu!"

[37] xi. 55.

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

CHAPTER X

Attitude Towards Hindu Orthodoxy and Other Religious Beliefs

The curious many-sidedness, tolerance, or inconsistency — whichever one may choose to call it — of the Bhagavad Gītā, which we have noted in nearly every chapter of this book, is shown nowhere more strikingly than in its attitude towards what we may call orthodox, established religion.

By this I mean the system of traditional sacrifices and observances, founded ultimately upon the Vedic cult, which became accepted by Brahmanism and were in the time of the Gītā, and have remained even to this day, theoretically incumbent upon all pious Hindus, at least of the upper castes. This system of rites implied and implies very little in the way of beliefs. It was and is, almost exclusively, a matter of formal observances. It is a matter of conformance to traditional propriety in actions; so long as one conforms outwardly, it makes little difference what he believes inwardly. It does, to be sure, imply recognition of the privileged status of the brahman caste, as the hereditary custodians of the cult, and the nominal leaders of society. No sacrifice was supposed to be valid unless a brahman was hired to perform it.

The original theory of this orthodox cult is fairly stated in the Bhagavad Gītā: "The gods, being prospered by sacrifices, shall grant you the enjoyments you desire. He who without giving to them enjoys their gifts is nothing but a thief." [1] That is, it is a matter of commerical bargaining between the old, traditional gods (not to be confused with the God of the Bhagavad Gītā!) and men. The gods control benefits, and grant them in exchange for the gratifications of the sacrifice. It is man's duty to furnish these gratifications; otherwise he would be getting something for nothing. In this passage the Gītā unhesitatingly commends this system. It even says that actions of the sacrifice have no binding effect,[2] and that sacrificers "are freed from all sins," [3] altho, to be sure, it adds that it is wicked to perform even such acts "selfishly," [4] — a statement that is hardly consistent with the theory of the ritual cult just quoted, which seems to imply that the whole basis of it is a matter of selfish interest. The fact is, however, that this theory, which is inherited from Vedic times, is not ordinarily brought out clearly in the Gītā or in other later religious texts. It is more often ignored or slurred over. The Gītā contains passages in which sacrificial

[1] iii. 12.
[2] iii. 9.
[3] iii. 13.
[4] iii. 12.

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

acts are spoken of as part of man's duty and to be performed simply *qua* duty — "abandoning attachment." [5] "Actions of sacrifice, alms, and penance are not to be abandoned; on the contrary they are to be performed. Sacrifice, alms, and penance are purifying for the wise. But even these actions are to be performed with abandonment of attachment and (of desire for) their fruits; that is my definite and final judgment." [6] "Sacrifice which is offered as contemplated by injunctions, by men who are not seeking the fruits thereof, simply because it is their duty to sacrifice, concentrating their minds, that is sacrifice of the highest quality." [7]

Otherwise it is possible by a mystic or symbolic interpretation of the word "sacrifice" to make it mean, or include, things which are quite different from commonplace ritual performance, and more in keeping with the general trend of the Gītā's teachings. In one passage we find indeed a statement which sounds like a thoro-going acceptance of the ritual dogma: "Those who eat the nectar of the leavings of the sacrifice go to the eternal Brahman. Not even this world, still less any other, is for him who does not sacrifice." [8] But in the surrounding stanzas [9] the word "sacrifice" is interpreted as including many different kinds of religious practices: restraint of the senses, devotion to the Brahman, ascetic austerities, "disciplined activity" (*yoga*), study, and "knowledge"; and all these are recognized [10] as forms of "sacrifice" that have their validity. It is added that "the sacrifice of knowledge is better than material sacrifice; all action (karma) without remainder is completely ended in knowledge." [11] The "sacrifice of knowledge" means, of course, the intellectual method of salvation, and equally of course it has nothing whatever to do with ritual sacrifices. It is only by mystic symbolism that the term "sacrifice" can be applied to it at all.

On the other hand there are not wanting in the Gītā passages which definitely disparage the ritual religion. "Those who take delight in the words of the Veda" are called "undiscerning," "full of desires, aiming at heaven"; their doctrines "yield rebirth as the fruit of actions," and are "replete with various rites aiming at the goal of enjoyment and power." [12] "The Vedas belong to the realm of the three strands (of material nature); be thou free from the three strands!" [13] The really wise man has no more need for the "knowledge" of the Vedas (the word Veda means "knowledge") than he needs a water-tank (for irrigation) when there is a general flood.[14] If so pronounced a polemic attitude is exceptional, there are various other passages which treat the ritual religion with scant respect. A man who gets

[5] iv. 23.
[6] xviii. 5, 6.
[7] xvii. 11.
[8] iv. 31.
[9] iv. 23–33.
[10] iv. 30.
[11] iv. 33.
[12] ii. 42, 43.
[13] ii. 45.
[14] ii. 46.

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

out of the "jungle of delusion" will become disgusted with the revealed religion or holy "tradition," and in turning against this holy "tradition" he will acquire discipline (*yoga*).[15] God's true form can never be known thru religious works.[16] He does not reveal Himself to the adherents of the traditional cult, not even to the gods to whom that cult is devoted, who long in vain for a sight of Him;[17] they know nothing of His nature and origin, and the seers (*ṛshis*) who are the reputed authors of the Vedic hymns are equally ignorant.[18]

The orthodox cult is put in its place, so to speak, in the statement that "those who desire the success of (ritual) acts sacrifice in this world to the gods."[19] That is, if you want the sort of thing that sacrifice is designed to accomplish, by all means sacrifice, and you will get it. It is a low sort of aim; but such as it is, if one honestly seeks it, he shall find it. And that precisely because of his sincerity and devotion to what he conceives, however mistakenly, to be his religious duty. "Those who are deprived of knowledge by this or that desire (for some fruit of religious actions) resort to other deities (than Me); they take up various religious systems, being constrained by their own natures."[20] If they are sincere, they get the fruit they seek; but it is the one true God, whom they know not, who gives it to them. "Whoever seeks to worship with true faith and devotion any (other) form (of deity), for him I make that same faith unswerving, and, being disciplined in that faith, he devotes himself to worship of that (form of deity), and obtains therefrom his desires, since it is none but I that grant them!"[21] True and righteous ritualists, "worshiping Me by means of sacrifices," duly succeed in gaining the sensuous heaven which is one of the traditional rewards of ritualism, and enjoy divine pleasures there.[22] But of course this is a very limited form of success. Such "heavenly" existences are finite; they belong to the round of rebirths just as much as do earthly human lives. When the effect of their religious merit is exhausted, such men fall to earth again.[23] All that has nothing to do with the real goal of man, which is release from *all* existence.

What is true of orthodox ritualism is true of all other sorts of religion. Any religion is better than none. Whole-hearted and unqualified condemnation is reserved for those "demoniac" (wicked) men who "say that the world is untrue, without any basis (religious principle upon which to rest), without God, not produced by regular mutual causation, in short, motivated by desire."[24] The "materialistic" school here referred to is accused by its

[15] ii. 52, 53.
[16] xi. 48.
[17] xi. 52, 53.
[18] x. 2, 14.
[19] iv. 12.
[20] vii. 20.
[21] vii. 21, 22.
[22] ix. 20.
[23] ix. 21.
[24] xvi. 8.

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

opponents of having taught that all religion and philosophy were nonsense; that there was no guiding principle in the world; that all was chance; that the alleged moral law of the effect of deeds on the doer was baseless; that there was no soul, and no life after death; and that consequently the wise man was he who devoted himself to getting as much worldly enjoyment out of life as he could. Such doctrines are of course abhorrent to the Gītā, as to all the accepted forms of Hinduism. On the other hand, those who genuinely tho erroneously worship other gods are really worshiping the true God, tho they do not know it; and God accepts their worship, imperfect tho it be. "Even those who are devoted to other deities and worship them, filled with faith, they too really worship Me, tho not in correct fashion. For I am both the recipient and the lord of all worship (literally, 'of all sacrifices'). But they do not know Me aright. Therefore they fall."[25] "They fall"; that is, the "heavenly" rewards which they attain are finite, and upon the exhaustion of the merit acquired by their sincere tho mistaken religious practices, they return to ordinary worldly life again. "But finite are these fruits which come to such ignorant men. Those who revere the (popular or ritualistic) gods go to the gods; those who revere Me go to Me."[26] So each religion brings its suitable reward. "Votaries of the gods go to the gods; votaries of the 'fathers' (spirits of the dead), to the 'fathers'; worshipers of the goblins go to the goblins; My worshipers also go to Me."[27] And, as the last paragraph shows, it is really thru the one God that the followers of other religions gain their objects. Since those objects are necessarily imperfect and limited, because their seekers are by definition ignorant of the true goal of man, it remains true that one should "abandon all (other) religious duties" and make (the one true) God alone his refuge.[28]

[25] ix. 23, 24.
[26] vii. 23.
[27] ix. 25.
[28] xviii. 66.

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

CHAPTER XI

Practical Morality

The Gītā's attitude toward practical morality is characteristic of most Hindu religions. In its relation to the ultimate goal of salvation, morality is only a secondary means. It alone is never sufficient to achieve that goal. But on the other hand it leads to ever better and higher existences, and helps to prepare for final success.

The importance of morality comes out most clearly on the negative side. Immorality is clearly regarded as a serious, indeed usually a fatal, hindrance.[1] To be sure we are told that "if even a very wicked man worships Me with single devotion, he is to be regarded as righteous after all; for he has the right resolution";[2] and again that "even if thou shouldst be the worst sinner of all sinners, thou shalt cross over all (the 'sea' of) evil merely by the boat of knowledge."[3] These passages suggest a sort of magic absolution from sin by devotion to God, or to knowledge, as the case may be. It might be inferred from them that it makes little or no difference what a man may do, so long as he succeeds in possessing himself of the key to salvation. This is, however, probably not a fair inference from the Gītā's words. In the first place we must remember that the Gītā is poetic in its language and not infrequently emphasizes its ideas by a certain overstatement. To drive home the importance of "devotion" or "knowledge" it attributes to each of them in turn the power to absolve from the most heinous sins. Secondly, the Gītā undoubtedly means to imply a reformation and repentance on the part of the sinner as a prerequisite, or at least concomitant, to the attainment of "devotion" or "knowledge." We are, indeed, told elsewhere in definite terms that wicked men cannot, in the nature of things, possess true devotion or knowledge either. "Wicked and deluded evil-doers do not resort to Me; their intelligence is taken away by (My) illusion (*māyā*), and they remain in the 'demoniac' condition."[4] (We shall see what is meant by the "demoniac" condition in the next paragraph.) In another passage "knowledge" is defined at length in distinctly ethical terms; that is, he who is wise is necessarily also righteous, as Socrates said. Knowledge includes "absence of pride and deceit, harmlessness, patience, uprightness, devotion to one's teacher,

[1] xvi. 22, which means to imply only that one must get rid of immorality first, before seeking the way to salvation.

[2] ix. 30.

[3] iv. 36.

[4] vii. 15.

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

purity, firmness, self-control, aversion to the objects of sense, unselfishness," and so forth; "indifference" and "devotion to God" are also included.[5] Again a description of the qualities of the perfected man, who is fit for union with Brahman, includes abstention from lust and hatred and from such vices as selfishness, violence, pride, desire, and anger.[6]

The sixteenth chapter of the Gītā is wholly devoted to a sort of practical moral code. It tells us that there are two kinds of "nature" or "condition" or "estate" of man, the "divine" and the "demoniac"; that is, the good and the bad, the sheep and the goats. The good estate tends towards emancipation, the bad towards continued bondage in existence.[7] That is, more explicitly, men who are bad or "demoniac" by nature are reborn again and again; they fail to reach God, and their fate is wretched,[8] while the good come finally to salvation.[9] The good are characterized by "fearlessness, purification of being, steadfastness in the discipline of knowledge (or, knowledge and disciplined activity), generosity, self-control, sacrifice, (religious) study, austerities, and uprightness; harmlessness, truth, freedom from anger, abandonment (or, generosity), serenity, freedom from malice, compassion to all creatures, uncovetousness, gentleness, modesty, no fickleness; majesty, patience, fortitude, purity, non-violence, freedom from pride."[10] The characteristics of the wicked are described and illustrated at much greater length. In general they are, of course, the opposites of the qualities just mentioned. But emphasis is laid on the ignorance of the wicked,[11] on their materialistic and atheistic philosophy,[12] on their overweening pride and stupid self-confidence.[13] "Resorting to egotism, violence, arrogance, lust, and wrath, they hate Me in their own bodies and those of others, these envious men";[14] that is, by their misdeeds they wrong God, who is in themselves and in other men. All their vices are finally traced to three primary vices, desire or lust, wrath, and greed, "a threefold gate to hell, destroying the soul."[15] He who is subject to them cannot hope for perfection or bliss.[16] In another passage desire or lust and wrath are referred to as the twin causes of all vice.[17] This seems indeed sufficient, since avarice or greed is only a specialized form of desire or lust. "Desire and loathing" is the formula in other places.[18] And since "loathing" is merely negative desire, while "wrath" or "passion" is only a pragmatic manifestation or result of desire, whether positive or negative, we find that in the last analysis "desire" is the root of all evil.[19]

[5] xiii. 7–11.
[6] xviii. 51–53.
[7] xvi. 5.
[8] xvi. 20.
[9] xvi. 22.
[10] xvi. 1–3.
[11] xvi. 7.
[12] xvi. 8; cf. page 79 f.
[13] xvi. 13 ff.
[14] xvi. 18.
[15] xvi. 21.
[16] xvi. 23.
[17] iii. 37.
[18] E.g., iii. 34.
[19] Cf. pages 22 and 58 above.

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

One positive feature of the Gītā's morality deserves special mention. As we saw above at the end of Chapter VII, the metaphysical doctrine that the one universal Soul is in all creatures furnishes an admirable basis for a very lofty type of morality. Since one's own Self or Soul is really identical with the Self or Soul of all other creatures,[20] therefore one who injures others injures himself. "For beholding the same Lord (the universal Soul) residing in all beings, a man does not harm himself (his own self in others) by himself; so he goes to the final goal." [21] Thus one of the most striking and emphatic of the ethical doctrines of the Gītā is substantially that of the Golden Rule. Man must treat all creatures alike, from the highest to the lowest,[22] namely like himself.[23] The perfected man "delights in the welfare of all beings." [24] This principle is usually regarded as perhaps the highest formulation of practical ethics that any religion has attained. It is interesting to see how naturally and simply it follows from one of the most fundamental tenets of the Gītā's philosophy.

A genuine application of this moral principle would seem almost inevitably to include avoidance of any violent injury to living beings. And, as is well known, most Hindu sects have in fact applied it in this way, at least in theory, and to a considerable extent in practice. "Non-violence" or "harmlessness" (*ahiṃsā*) has generally been accepted as a cardinal virtue. It finds expression for instance in the vegetarian diet which so many Hindus have always favored, and in the policy of pacifism and "passive resistance" which, while never adopted universally, has probably had more followers at every period in India than in most other lands.

The Gītā's morality on this point is somewhat disappointing. It does indeed include "harmlessness" or "non-violence" (*ahiṃsā*) in several of its lists of virtues.[25] But it never singles it out for special emphasis. It seems to be content to let it lie buried in such more or less formal moral catalogs. One gets the impression that it was too prominent and well-recognized a virtue to be ignored; so some lip-homage is paid to it. But it is never definitely and sharply applied in such a form as "Thou shalt not kill." The Gītā contrasts strikingly in this respect with some other Hindu sects, such as the Buddhists and (still more) the Jains. It seems a little strange, at first sight, to find any Hindu religious text treating the doctrine of non-violence in so stepmotherly a fashion. But of course the reason is quite evident. The Gītā is hampered by the fact that it is supposed to justify Arjuna's partici-

[20] iv. 35; v. 7; vi. 29, etc.
[21] xiii. 28.
[22] v. 18; cf. vi. 9.
[23] vi. 32.
[24] v. 25.
[25] xiii. 7 and xvi. 2, quoted on pp. 81, 82; also x. 5 and xvii. 14.

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

pation in war. This dramatic situation is alluded to repeatedly, and the author seems to have it in the back of his head a large part of the time. To be sure, many of his doctrines are inconsistent enough with such a purpose, as we have abundantly seen. And we must not forget, either, that "non-injury" is clearly implied in the Gītā's teachings on the subject of unselfishness and doing good to others. That is, to carry out these teachings in any real sense would necessarily involve doing no harm to living creatures. But to lay a frank and full emphasis upon this principle, to follow it out explicitly to its logical conclusion, would mean to run so glaringly counter to the professed aim of the piece, that it is not strange that the author avoids doing so. Even his catholicity seems to have shrunk from such an inconsistency as that. We can hardly help feeling, however, that he lost a golden opportunity thereby.

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

THIRD PART

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

CHAPTER XII

Summary

FIRST PART: PRELIMINARY CHAPTERS

Chapter I. *Introductory.* — The Bhagavad Gītā, the Bible of Kṛṣṇaism, is dramatically a part of the Mahābhārata. Its ostensible purpose is to prove to Arjuna, one of the heroes of that epic, the necessity and propriety of taking part in the battle which is the epic's main theme. In actual fact, it is a mystic poem, dealing with the nature of the soul and body of man, man's relation to God, and the way or ways by which man is to attain salvation. It is poetic, mystical, and devotional, rather than logical and philosophical. It contains many discordant doctrines; to try to unite them all in a consistent system is to do violence to its spirit. In this respect it is like all Hindu speculative literature of its time and earlier, — particularly like the Upaniṣads, to which it is deeply indebted. Like them, too, it is practical in its attitude, seeking religious or philosophic truth not for its own sake but as a means of human salvation.

Chapter II. *The Origins of Hindu Speculation.* — Out of the ritualistic polytheism, based on nature-worship, of the Rig Veda, developed on the one hand the pure ritualism of the Brāhmaṇa texts, on the other hand tentative speculations leading towards either monotheism or monism, — seeking to explain the constitution of the universe and of man in terms of a unitary principle. This unitary principle is at first often described concretely and physically; but with the passage of time the tendency is towards ever more abstract and metaphysical terms, culminating in such expressions as "the Existent" (*sat*), or "the Self, Soul" (*ātman*). The influence of ritualistic terms is also evident, particularly in the use of the Brahman, the embodiment of the ritual religion, as a name for the principle of the universe. From very early times the texts set up a parallelism between the universe, the macrocosm, and man, the microcosm.

Chapter III. *The Upaniṣads, and the Fundamental Doctrines of Later Hindu Thought.* — In the Upaniṣads this parallelism becomes an identity, by the Brāhmaṇa principle of mystic identification: the Soul of the universe is identified with the Soul of man, and by this identification man hopes to "know" and so magically to control the universe, which is declared to be his self. In the Upaniṣads, too, we find the first clear statements of the basic axioms of later Hinduism, which may be summed up as follows. First, *pessimism*: all empiric existence is evil. Second, *transmigration*, with the

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

doctrine of *karma*: all living beings are subject to an indefinite series of reincarnations, and the conditions of each incarnation are determined by the moral quality of acts performed in previous incarnations. Third, *salvation* lies in release from this chain of existences; it is to be gained primarily by *knowledge* of the supreme truth, which has a quasi-magic power of giving its possessor control over his destiny. As secondary or auxiliary means of salvation are mentioned morality, asceticism in some form or other, and devotion to a supreme being or prophetic personality. These seem originally to have been meant as aids to the attainment of saving knowledge, and they have little importance in the Upaniṣads; but in various later sects one or another of them at times becomes so important as to obscure the originally primary aim of "knowledge."

Chapter IV. *Prehistory of the God of the Bhagavad Gītā.* — The Deity of the Gītā seems to be a blend of the impersonal Upaniṣadic Absolute with a popular god or deified hero, Kṛṣṇa, who was identified with the Vedic god Viṣṇu. The combination thus formed contained, therefore, elements which could appeal to orthodox ritualists, to speculative intellectuals, and to the untutored masses.

SECOND PART: THE TEACHINGS OF THE BHAGAVAD GĪTĀ

Chapter V. *Soul and Body.* — All creatures are composed of two eternal and eternally distinct elements, soul and body. The body, including what are called "psychic" elements, is material; is subject to evolution, devolution, and change of all sorts; and consists of a blend of various elements or qualities. The soul is immaterial, uniform, unchangeable, without qualities, and inactive. All action is performed by the material body, upon other material bodies or substances. The soul neither acts nor is affected by action; indeed it is not affected by any influence outside of itself. It has only contemplative powers. Ordinary creatures, however, confuse body and soul, owing to the disturbing influence of the material organ of self-consciousness, and imagine that their souls act and suffer. The enlightened man realizes the true distinction between soul and body; his soul is thereby freed from the bondage of connection with the body, whence come action and suffering; and he attains release.

Chapter VI. *The Nature of God.* — God is pictured as the First Principle of the universe, the Soul of all; the highest or best part of all; the noblest aspect of all; immanent in all (sometimes even in what is considered evil, but sometimes only in what is considered good). God seems generally to be regarded as a principle distinct from either the soul or the body of individual beings, tho they are all "in Him." He transcends the universe. Sometimes

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

the Upaniṣadic Brahman seems to be identified with God; but at other times Brahman is distinguished from God, and is then ordinarily subordinated to Him. At times God is spoken of dualistically; his "lower nature" is the empiric, material universe, his "higher nature" is supernal and beyond the ken of empiric creatures. God takes on individual incarnations to save the world of men; such an incarnation is Kṛṣṇa. His supreme form is revealed only as a rare act of grace to His elect; such an act of grace is granted to Arjuna, who beholds God's very Self in a mystic vision.

Chapter VII. *Action and Rebirth.* — Any action, good or bad, must normally have its effect in continued existence for the doer. But the Gītā says that this is due not to the action as such, but to *desire* underlying the action. Acts performed with indifference to the results, without interest in the outcome, have no binding effect. It is therefore unnecessary to renounce action altogether. It is even improper to do so — as well as impossible. We cannot refrain from action if we would, and we should not if we could. Man must do his duty, without desire or fear of the consequences. Most often duty is not defined; we are told simply to do our duty *qua* duty, as a sort of categorical imperative, without selfish interest. At other times attempts are made to define duty in terms of religious or social requirements, or on the basis of the oneness of man with his neighbors and with God, from which is deduced the duty of treating others as oneself.

Chapter VIII. *The Way of Knowledge and the Way of Disciplined Activity.* — The Gītā distinguishes two schools of thought which it calls Sāṃkhya and Yoga. By Sāṃkhya it means the doctrine of salvation thru the power of perfect knowledge, implying withdrawal from the world and renunciation of actions. By Yoga it means the opposing doctrine that one should seek emancipation by unselfish performance of duty. Both of these doctrines are recognized as leading to salvation, and in particular the power of knowledge is fully admitted in various places. Nevertheless the Gītā usually prefers the way of "indifference in action" or "disciplined activity," which is spoken of as leading to knowledge, or else as bringing salvation directly, and more "easily" than the way of knowledge and inaction.

Chapter IX. *The Way of Devotion to God.* — This is a still "easier" way of gaining salvation, and is most favored of all in the Gītā, altho it too is at times spoken of as bringing man to salvation indirectly, by perfecting him in "knowledge" or "discipline." By filling his being with love of God, and doing all acts as a service to God, man attains union with Him; that is, salvation. Sometimes God is spoken of as Himself intervening to help his devotees towards this goal. It is particularly important that man should fix his mind on God at the hour of death; this has a special tendency to bring the soul of the dying man to God.

Chapter X. *Attitude Towards Hindu Orthodoxy and Other Religious Be-*

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

liefs. — The Gītā contains some expressions that are distinctly hostile to the orthodox ritualistic religion. In general, however, it is tolerant of it, or even recommends the "disinterested" performance of its rites, as a matter of "duty." Towards rival religions in general its attitude is broad and tolerant; it admits a qualified validity to all acts of sincere religious devotion.

Chapter XI. *Practical Morality.* — While morality has only minor importance in the Gītā's scheme of salvation, immorality is usually regarded as a fatal obstacle to it. Desire is the most fundamental cause of vice. The most prominent specific ethical principle in the Gītā is that of doing good to others, treating others as oneself. Yet the injunction to do no harm to any living creature, tho it is a logical inference from that principle and tho it is very prominent in most Hindu ethical systems, is barely mentioned in the Gītā and receives no emphasis.

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

CHAPTER XIII

Conclusion

It has been my purpose in this book to let the Bhagavad Gītā tell its own story in the main, with as little comment of my own as possible. However, the mere topical arrangement of the Gītā's materials is in itself an implied comment; for it is wholly foreign to the Gītā itself, which constantly juxtaposes unrelated matters and widely separates passages dealing with the same subjects. And it has seemed to me, after all, neither desirable nor possible to refrain from indicating the relations between the various doctrines of the Gītā as they appear to me.

For this, to me, is what an interpretation must be. I should not know how to attempt any other kind. And I am obliged to believe that it is worth attempting; that if one succeeded, the result would help towards understanding the Gītā. To bring together its different answers to this or that question must surely be useful. And it does not prevent a true view of the book, so long as one is careful to emphasize the fact that logical arrangement is not intended in the book itself. This I have tried to make very clear. Without this proviso, it might perhaps be maintained that to present the book's doctrines in logical arrangement is to violate its spirit.

For, as we have now abundantly seen, the Gītā makes no attempt to be logical or systematic in its philosophy. It is frankly mystical and emotional. What we may, if we like, call its inconsistencies are not due to slovenliness in reasoning; nor do they express a balanced reserve of judgment. This is sufficiently proved in several cases by the fact that the Gītā deliberately brackets two opposing views and asserts the validity of both. It is only in the realm of logic that we must choose between yes and no, or else confess ignorance. The Gītā finds no difficulty in saying both yes and no, at the same time. For its point of view is simply unrelated to logic. Even what it calls "knowledge" is really intuitional perception; it is not, and is not intended to be, based on rational analysis. And, as we have seen, "knowledge" is not the Gītā's favorite "way of salvation." To the Gītā, as to the Christian mystics, reason is an uncertain and flickering light. The truly "wise" man should abandon it wholly and follow the "kindly Light," the *lux benigna*, of God's grace. He must sink his personality in ecstatic devotion to God, trusting absolutely in Him, and throwing upon Him all responsibility, doing all deeds as "acts of worship" to God. In the long run nothing else matters. Of course, the Gītā differs from the Christian mystics in some

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

of its fundamental doctrines; for after all it is a Hindu work, and shares the common Hindu axioms. Yet in the practical outcome of its teachings it is astonishing to see how close it comes to many of them. It recalls them in its mystical, anti-rational point of view; in its ardent, personal, devotional theism; in its subjectivity, its focusing of the attention within, to the exclusion of all interest in that which is outside the individual's soul ("the Kingdom of God is within you"); and in its conception of the final goal as complete union with God, a state of supernal and indescribable bliss and peace.

There is one other characteristic of the Gītā's teachings, which seems to me to show such good psychology that it might be commended to the consideration of the Christian mystics; whether it is paralleled in their expressions or not, I do not know. The Gītā, we have seen, values the emotional and the concrete above the rational and the abstract *because* they are "easier." It is less troublesome to feel than to think. I take it that it needs no argument to prove the truth of this claim. It is equally evident that doctrines imbued with this spirit might naturally be expected to win popularity. I have already suggested that the enormous following which the Gītā has always had in India may be due in large part to its readiness to meet the ordinary man on his own ground, to make salvation as easy as possible for him. Objection might be raised against such an attitude from the rationalistic point of view; the rationalist may say that what is easier for man to grasp is not necessarily truer or as true. But from the Gītā's mystical point of view a man is as he feels; if he feels united with God, he is — or at least he shall be — united with God. And, speaking pragmatically, the Gītā's position is justified by the fact that many millions of men have found religious comfort in it, and expected salvation thru it. Who can say that they were disappointed? And if it should be granted that they were not, would not the Gītā have proved the usefulness of its doctrines, and so their pragmatic "truth"?

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

THE SONG CELESTIAL

SIR EDWIN ARNOLD'S TRANSLATION OF THE BHAGAVAD GĪTĀ

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

THE SONG CELESTIAL

Sir Edwin Arnold's Translation of the Bhagavad Gītā

CHAPTER I

Dhritarashtra:

Ranged thus for battle on the sacred plain —
On Kurukshetra — say, Sanjaya! say
What wrought my people, and the Pandavas?

Sanjaya:

When he beheld the host of Pandavas
Raja Duryôdhana to Drona drew,
And spake these words: "Ah, Guru! see this line,
How vast it is of Pandu fighting-men,
Embattled by the son of Drupada,
Thy scholar in the war! Therein stand ranked
Chiefs like Arjuna, like to Bhîma chiefs,
Benders of bows; Virâta, Yuyudhân,
Drupada, eminent upon his car,
Dhrishtaket, Chekitân, Kaśi's stout lord,
Purujit, Kuntibhôj, and Śaivya,
With Yudhâmanyu, and Uttamauj
Subhadra's child; and Draupadi's; — all famed!
All mounted on their shining chariots!
On our side, too, — thou best of Brahmans! see
Excellent chiefs, commanders of my line,
Whose names I joy to count: thyself the first,
Then Bhishma, Karna, Kripa fierce in fight,
Vikarna, Aśwatthâman; next to these
Strong Saumadatti, with full many more
Valiant and tried, ready this day to die
For me their king, each with his weapon grasped,
Each skilful in the field. Weakest — meseems —

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

Our battle shows where Bhishma holds command,
And Bhima, fronting him, something too strong!
Have care our captains nigh to Bhishma's ranks
Prepare what help they may! Now, blow my shell!"

Then, at the signal of the aged king,
With blare to wake the blood, rolling around
Like to a lion's roar, the trumpeter
Blew the great Conch; and, at the noise of it,
Trumpets and drums, cymbals and gongs and horns
Burst into sudden clamor; as the blasts
Of loosened tempest, such the tumult seemed!
Then might be seen, upon their car of gold
Yoked with white steeds, blowing their battle-shells,
Krishna the God, Arjuna at his side:
Krishna, with knotted locks, blew his great conch
Carved of the "Giant's bone;" Arjuna blew
Indra's loud gift; Bhima the terrible —
Wolf-bellied Bhima — blew a long reed-conch;
And Yudhisthira, Kunti's blameless son,
Winded a mighty shell, "Victory's Voice;"
And Nakula blew shrill upon his conch
Named the "Sweet-sounding," Sahadev on his
Called "Gem-bedecked," and Kaśi's Prince on his.
Sikhandi on his car, Dhrishtadyumn,
Virâta, Sâtyaki the Unsubdued,
Drupada, with his sons, (O Lord of Earth!)
Long-armed Subhadra's children, all blew loud,
So that the clangor shook their foemen's hearts,
With quaking earth and thundering heav'n.
Then 'twas —
Beholding Dhritarashtra's battle set,
Weapons unsheathing, bows drawn forth, the war
Instant to break — Arjun, whose ensign-badge
Was Hanuman the monkey, spake this thing
To Krishna the Divine, his charioteer:
"Drive, Dauntless One! to yonder open ground
Betwixt the armies; I would see more nigh
These who will fight with us, those we must slay
To-day, in war's arbitrament; for, sure,
On bloodshed all are bent who throng this plain,
Obeying Dhritarashtra's sinful son."

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

Thus, by Arjuna prayed (O Bharata!)
Between the hosts that heavenly Charioteer
Drove the bright car, reigning its milk-white steeds
Where Bhishma led, and Drona, and their Lords.
"See!" spake he to Arjuna, "where they stand,
Thy kindred of the Kurus:" and the Prince
Marked on each hand the kinsmen of his house,
Grandsires and sires, uncles and brothers and sons,
Cousins and sons-in-law and nephews, mixed
With friends and honored elders; some this side,
Some that side ranged: and, seeing those opposed,
Such kith grown enemies — Arjuna's heart
Melted with pity, while he uttered this:

ARJUNA:

Krishna! as I behold, come here to shed
Their common blood, yon concourse of our kin,
My members fail, my tongue dries in my mouth,
A shudder thrills my body, and my hair
Bristles with horror; from my weak hand slips
Gandîv, the goodly bow; a fever burns
My skin to parching; hardly may I stand;
The life within me seems to swim and faint;
Nothing do I foresee save woe and wail!
It is not good, O Keshav! nought of good
Can spring from mutual slaughter! Lo, I hate
Triumph and domination, wealth and ease,
Thus sadly won! *Aho!* what victory
Can bring delight, Govinda! what rich spoils
Could profit; what rule recompense; what span
Of life itself seem sweet, bought with such blood?
Seeing that these stand here, ready to die,
For whose sake life was fair, and pleasure pleased,
And power grew precious: — grandsires, sires, and sons,
Brothers, and fathers-in-law, and sons-in-law,
Elders and friends! Shall I deal death on these
Even though they seek to slay us? Not one blow,
O Madhusudan! will I strike to gain
The rule of all Three Worlds; then, how much less
To seize an earthly kingdom! Killing these
Must breed but anguish, Krishna! If they be
Guilty, we shall grow guilty by their deaths;

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

Their sins will light on us, if we shall slay
Those sons of Dhritarashtra, and our kin;
What peace could come of that, O Madhava?
For if indeed, blinded by lust and wrath,
These cannot see, or will not see, the sin
Of kingly lines o'erthrown and kinsmen slain,
How should not we, who see, shun such a crime —
We who perceive the guilt and feel the shame —
Oh, thou Delight of Men, Janârdana?
By overthrow of houses perisheth
Their sweet continuous household piety,
And — rites neglected, piety extinct —
Enters impiety upon that home;
Its women grow unwomaned, whence there spring
Mad passions, and the mingling-up of castes,
Sending a Hell-ward road that family,
And whoso wrought its doom by wicked wrath.
Nay, and the souls of honored ancestors
Fall from their place of peace, being bereft
Of funeral-cakes and the wan death-water.[1]
So teach our holy hymns. Thus, if we slay
Kinsfolk and friends for love of earthly power,
Ahovat! what an evil fault it were!
Better I deem it, if my kinsmen strike,
To face them weaponless, and bare my breast
To shaft and spear, than answer blow with blow.

So speaking, in the face of those two hosts,
Arjuna sank upon his chariot-seat,
And let fall bow and arrows, sick at heart.

HERE ENDETH CHAPTER I. OF THE

BHAGAVAD-GĪTĀ,

Entitled "Arjun-Vishâd,"
Or "The Book of the Distress of Arjuna."

[1] Some repetitionary lines are here omitted.

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

CHAPTER II

SANJAYA:

Him, filled with such compassion and such grief,
With eyes tear-dimmed, despondent, in stern words
The Driver, Madhusudan, thus addressed:

KRISHNA:

How hath this weakness taken thee? Whence springs
The inglorious trouble, shameful to the brave,
Barring the path of virtue? Nay, Arjun!
Forbid thyself to feebleness! it mars
Thy warrior-name! cast off the coward-fit!
Wake! Be thyself! Arise, Scourge of thy foes!

ARJUNA:

How can I, in the battle, shoot with shafts
On Bhishma, or on Drona — oh, thou Chief! —
Both worshipful, both honorable men?

Better to live on beggar's bread
With those we love alive,
Than taste their blood in rich feasts spread,
And guiltily survive!
Ah! were it worse — who knows? — to be
Victor or vanquished here,
When those confront us angrily
Whose death leaves living drear?
In pity lost, by doubtings tossed,
My thoughts — distracted — turn
To Thee, the Guide I reverence most,
That I may counsel learn.
I know not what would heal the grief
Burned into soul and sense,
If I were earth's unchallenged chief —
A god — and these gone thence!

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

SANJAYA:

So spake Arjuna to the Lord of Hearts,
And sighing, "I will not fight!" held silence then.
To whom, with tender smile (O Bharata!)
While the Prince wept despairing 'twixt those hosts,
Krishna made answer in divinest verse:

KRISHNA:

Thou grievest where no grief should be! thou speak'st
Words lacking wisdom! for the wise in heart
Mourn not for those that live, nor those that die.
Nor I, nor thou, nor any one of these,
Ever was not, nor ever will not be,
For ever and for ever afterwards.
All, that doth live, lives always! To man's frame
As there come infancy and youth and age,
So come there raisings-up and layings-down
Of other and of other life-abodes,
Which the wise know, and fear not. This that irks —
Thy sense-life, thrilling to the elements —
Bringing thee heat and cold, sorrows and joys,
'Tis brief and mutable! Bear with it, Prince!
As the wise bear. The soul which is not moved,
The soul that with a strong and constant calm
Takes sorrow and takes joy indifferently,
Lives in the life undying! That which is
Can never cease to be; that which is not
Will not exist. To see this truth of both
Is theirs who part essence from accident,
Substance from shadow. Indestructible,
Learn thou! the Life is, spreading life through all;
It cannot anywhere, by any means,
Be anywise diminished, stayed, or changed.
But for these fleeting frames which it informs
With spirit deathless, endless, infinite,
They perish. Let them perish, Prince! and fight!
He who shall say, "Lo! I have slain a man!"
He who shall think, "Lo! I am slain!" those both
Know naught! Life cannot slay. Life is not slain!

Never the spirit was born; the spirit shall cease to be never;
Never was time it was not; End and Beginning are dreams!

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

Birthless and deathless and changeless remaineth the spirit for ever;
Death hath not touched it at all, dead though the house of it seems!

Who knoweth it exhaustless, self-sustained,
Immortal, indestructible, — shall such
Say, "I have killed a man, or caused to kill"?

Nay, but as when one layeth
His worn-out robes away,
And, taking new ones, sayeth,
"These will I wear to-day!"
So putteth by the spirit
Lightly its garb of flesh.
And passeth to inherit
A residence afresh.

I say to thee weapons reach not the Life,
Flame burns it not, waters cannot o'erwhelm,
Nor dry winds wither it. Impenetrable,
Unentered, unassailed, unharmed, untouched,
Immortal, all-arriving, stable, sure,
Invisible, ineffable, by word
And thought uncompassed, ever all itself,
Thus is the Soul declared! How wilt thou, then,
Knowing it so, — grieve when thou shouldst not grieve?
How, if thou hearest that the man new-dead
Is, like the man new-born, still living man —
One same, existent Spirit — wilt thou weep?
The end of birth is death; the end of death
Is birth: this is ordained! and mournest thou,
Chief of the stalwart arm! for what befalls
Which could not otherwise befall? The birth
Of living things comes unperceived; the death
Comes unperceived; between them, beings perceive
What is there sorrowful herein, dear Prince?

Wonderful, wistful, to contemplate!
Difficult, doubtful, to speak upon!
Strange and great for tongue to relate,
Mystical hearing for every one!
Nor wotteth man this, what a marvel it is,
When seeing, and saying, and hearing are done!

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

This Life within all living things, my Prince!
Hides beyond harm; scorn thou to suffer, then,
For that which cannot suffer. Do thy part!
Be mindful of thy name, and tremble not!
Nought better can betide a martial soul
Than lawful war; happy the warrior
To whom comes joy of battle — comes, as now,
Glorious and fair, unsought; opening for him
A gateway unto Heav'n. But, if thou shunn'st
This honorable field — a Kshattriya —
If, knowing thy duty and thy task, thou bidd'st
Duty and task go by — that shall be sin!
And those to come shall speak thee infamy
From age to age; but infamy is worse
For men of noble blood to bear than death!
The chiefs upon their battle-chariots
Will deem 'twas fear that drove thee from the fray.
Of those who held thee mighty-souled the scorn
Thou must abide, while all thine enemies
Will scatter bitter speech of thee, to mock
The valor which thou hadst; what fate could fall
More grievously than this? Either — being killed —
Thou wilt win Swarga's safety, or — alive
And victor — thou wilt reign an earthly king.
Therefore, arise, thou Son of Kunti! brace
Thine arm for conflict, nerve thy heart to meet —
As things alike to thee — pleasure or pain,
Profit or ruin, victory or defeat:
So minded, gird thee to the fight, for so
Thou shalt not sin!

Thus far I speak to thee
As from the "Sânkhya" — unspiritually —
Hear now the deeper teaching of the Yôg,
Which holding, understanding, thou shalt burst
Thy Karmabandh, the bondage of wrought deeds.
Here shall no end be hindered, no hope marred
No loss be feared: faith — yea, a little faith —
Shall save thee from the anguish of thy dread.
Here, Glory of the Kurus! shines one rule —
One steadfast rule — while shifting souls have laws
Many and hard. Specious, but wrongful deem

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

The speech of those ill-taught ones who extol
The letter of their Vedas, saying, "This
Is all we have, or need;" being weak at heart
With wants, seekers of Heaven: which comes — they say —
As "fruit of good deeds done;" promising men
Much profit in new births for works of faith;
In various rites abounding; following whereon
Large merit shall accrue towards wealth and power;
Albeit, who wealth and power do most desire
Least fixity of soul have such, least hold
On heavenly meditation. Much these teach,
From Veds, concerning the "three qualities;"
But thou, be free of the "three qualities,"
Free of the "pairs of opposites," [1] and free
From that sad righteousness which calculates;
Self-ruled, Arjuna! simple, satisfied! [2]
Look! like as when a tank pours water forth
To suit all needs, so do these Brahmans draw
Texts for all wants from tank of Holy Writ.
But thou, want not! ask not! Find full reward
Of doing right in right! Let right deeds be
Thy motive, not the fruit which comes from them.
And live in action! Labor! Make thine acts
Thy piety, casting all self aside,
Contemning gain and merit; equable
In good or evil: equability
Is Yôg, is piety!

Yet, the right act
Is less, far less, than the right-thinking mind.
Seek refuge in thy soul; have there thy heaven!
Scorn them that follow virtue for her gifts!
The mind of pure devotion — even here —
Casts equally aside good deeds and bad,
Passing above them. Unto pure devotion
Devote thyself: with perfect meditation
Comes perfect act, and the right-hearted rise —
More certainly because they seek no gain —
Forth from the bands of body, step by step,
To highest seats of bliss. When thy firm soul

[1] Technical phrases of Vedic religion.
[2] The whole of this passage is highly involved and difficult to render.

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

Hath shaken off those tangled oracles
Which ignorantly guide, then shall it soar
To high neglect of what's denied or said,
This way or that way, in doctrinal writ.
Troubled no longer by the priestly lore
Safe shall it live, and sure; steadfastly bent
On meditation. This is Yôg — and Peace!

ARJUNA:

What is his mark who hath that steadfast heart,
Confirmed in holy meditation? How
Know we his speech, Keśava? Sits he, moves he
Like other men?

KRISHNA:

When one, O Prithâ's Son! —
Abandoning desires which shake the mind —
Finds in his soul full comfort for his soul,
He hath attained the Yôg — that man is such!
In sorrows not dejected, and in joys
Not overjoyed; dwelling outside the stress
Of passion, fear, and anger; fixed in calms
Of lofty contemplation; — such an one
Is Muni, is the Sage, the true Recluse!
He, who to none and nowhere overbound
By ties of flesh, takes evil things and good
Neither desponding nor exulting, such
Bears wisdom's plainest mark! He who shall draw,
As the wise tortoise draws its four feet safe
Under its shield, his five frail senses back
Under the spirit's buckler from the world
Which else assails them, such an one, my Prince!
Hath wisdom's mark! Things that solicit sense
Hold off from the self-governed; nay, it comes,
The appetites of him who lives beyond
Depart, — aroused no more. Yet may it chance
O Son of Kunti! that a governed mind
Shall some time feel the sense-storms sweep, and wrest
Strong self-control by the roots. Let him regain
His kingdom! let him conquer this, and sit
On Me intent. That man alone is wise
Who keeps the mastery of himself! If one

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

Ponders on objects of the sense, there springs
Attraction; from attraction grows desire,
Desire flames to fierce passion, passion breeds
Recklessness; then the memory — all betrayed —
Lets noble purpose go, and saps the mind,
Till purpose, mind, and man are all undone.
But, if one deals with objects of the sense
Not loving and not hating, making them
Serve his free soul, which rests serenely lord,
Lo! such a man comes to tranquillity;
And out of that tranquillity shall rise
The end and healing of his earthly pains,
Since the will governed sets the soul at peace.
The soul of the ungoverned is not his,
Nor hath he knowledge of himself; which lacked,
How grows serenity? and, wanting that
Whence shall he hope for happiness?
The mind
That gives itself to follow shows of sense
Seeth its helm of wisdom rent away,
And, like a ship in waves of whirlwind, drives
To wreck and death. Only with him, great Prince!
Whose senses are not swayed by things of sense —
Only with him who holds his mastery,
Shows wisdom perfect. What is midnight-gloom
To unenlightened souls shines wakeful day
To his clear gaze; what seems as wakeful day
Is known for night, thick night of ignorance,
To his true-seeing eyes. Such is the Saint!

And like the ocean, day by day receiving
Floods from all lands, which never overflows;
Its boundary-line not leaping, and not leaving,
Fed by the rivers, but unswelled by those; —

So is the perfect one! to his soul's ocean
The world of sense pours streams of witchery;
They leave him as they find, without commotion,
Taking their tribute, but remaining sea.

Yea! whoso, shaking off the yoke of flesh,
Lives lord, not servant, of his lusts; set free

INDIAN COUNCIL FOR CULTURAL RELATIONS LIBRARY
9857
NEW DELHI

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

From pride, from passion, from the sin of "Self,"
Toucheth tranquillity! O Prithâ's son!
That is the state of Brahm! There rests no dread
When that last step is reached! Live where he will,
Die when he may, such passeth from all 'plaining,
To blest Nirvâna, with the Gods, attaining.

HERE ENDETH CHAPTER II. OF THE

BHAGAVAD-GĪTĀ,

Entitled "Sânkhya-Yôg,"
The Book of Doctrines."

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

CHAPTER III

ARJUNA:

Thou whom all mortals praise, Jaṇârdana!
If meditation be a nobler thing
Than action, wherefore, then, great Keśava!
Dost thou impel me to this dreadful fight?
Now am I by thy doubtful speech disturbed!
Tell me one thing, and tell me certainly;
By what road shall I find the better end?

KRISHNA:

I told thee, blameless Lord! there be two paths
Shown to this world; two schools of wisdom. First
The Sânkhya's, which doth save in way of works
Prescribed [1] by reason; next, the Yôg, which bids
Attain by meditation, spiritually:
Yet these are one! No man shall 'scape from act
By shunning action; nay, and none shall come
By mere renouncements unto perfectness.
Nay, and no jot of time, at any time,
Rests any actionless; his nature's law
Compels him, even unwilling, into act;
[For thought is act in fancy]. He who sits
Suppressing all the instruments of flesh,
Yet in his idle heart thinking on them,
Plays the inept and guilty hypocrite:
But he who, with strong body serving mind,
Gives up his mortal powers to worthy work,
Not seeking gain, Arjuna! such an one
Is honorable. Do thine allotted task!
Work is more excellent than idleness;
The body's life proceeds not, lacking work.
There is a task of holiness to do,
Unlike world-binding toil, which bindeth not
The faithful soul; such earthly duty do
Free from desire, and thou shalt well perform

[1] I feel convinced *sânkhyânân* and *yoginân* must be transposed here in sense.

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

Thy heavenly purpose. Spake Prajâpati —
In the beginning, when all men were made,
And, with mankind, the sacrifice — "Do this!
Work! sacrifice! Increase and multiply
With sacrifice! This shall be Kamadhuk,
Your 'Cow of Plenty,' giving back her milk
Of all abundance. Worship the gods thereby;
The gods shall yield ye grace. Those meats ye crave
The gods will grant to Labor, when it pays
Tithes in the altar-flame. But if one eats
Fruits of the earth, rendering to kindly Heaven
No gift of toil, that thief steals from his world."

Who eat of food after their sacrifice
Are quit of fault, but they that spread a feast
All for themselves, eat sin and drink of sin.
By food the living live; food comes of rain,
And rain comes by the pious sacrifice,
And sacrifice is paid with tithes of toil;
Thus action is of Brahmâ, who is One,
The Only, All-pervading; at all times
Present in sacrifice. He that abstains
To help the rolling wheels of this great world,
Glutting his idle sense, lives a lost life,
Shameful and vain. Existing for himself,
Self-concentrated, serving self alone,
No part hath he in aught; nothing achieved,
Nought wrought or unwrought toucheth him; no hope
Of help for all the living things of earth
Depends from him.[1] Therefore, thy task prescribed
With spirit unattached gladly perform,
Since in performance of plain duty man
Mounts to his highest bliss. By works alone
Janak, and ancient saints reached blessedness!
Moreover, for the upholding of thy kind,
Action thou should'st embrace. What the wise choose
The unwise people take; what best men do
The multitude will follow. Look on me,
Thou Son of Prithâ! in the three wide worlds
I am not bound to any toil, no height

[1] I am doubtful of accuracy here.

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

Awaits to scale, no gift remains to gain,
Yet I act here! and, if I acted not —
Earnest and watchful — those that look to me
For guidance, sinking back to sloth again
Because I slumbered, would decline from good,
And I should break earth's order and commit
Her offspring unto ruin, Bharata!
Even as the unknowing toil, wedded to sense,
So let the enlightened toil, sense-freed, but set
To bring the world deliverance, and its bliss;
Not sowing in those simple, busy hearts
Seed of despair. Yea! let each play his part
In all he finds to do, with unyoked soul.
All things are everywhere by Nature wrought
In interaction of the qualities.
The fool, cheated by self, thinks, "This I did"
And "That I wrought;" but — ah, thou strong-armed Prince! —
A better-lessoned mind, knowing the play
Of visible things within the world of sense,
And how the qualities must qualify,
Standeth aloof even from his acts. Th' untaught
Live mixed with them, knowing not Nature's way,
Of highest aims unwitting, slow and dull.
Those make thou not to stumble, having the light;
But all thy dues discharging, for My sake,
With meditation centred inwardly,
Seeking no profit, satisfied, serene,
Heedless of issue — fight! They who shall keep
My ordinance thus, the wise and willing hearts,
Have quittance from all issue of their acts;
But those who disregard my ordinance,
Thinking they know, know nought, and fall to loss,
Confused and foolish. 'Sooth, the instructed one
Doth of his kind, following what fits him most;
And lower creatures of their kind; in vain
Contending 'gainst the law. Needs must it be
The objects of the sense will stir the sense
To like and dislike, yet th' enlightened man
Yields not to these, knowing them enemies.
Finally, this is better, that one do
His own task as he may, even though he fail,
Than take tasks not his own, though they seem good.

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

To die performing duty is no ill;
But who seeks other roads shall wander still.

ARJUNA:

Yet tell me, Teacher! by what force doth man
Go to his ill, unwilling; as if one
Pushed him that evil path?

KRISHNA:

Kama it is.
Passion it is! born of the Darknesses,
Which pusheth him. Mighty of appetite,
Sinful, and strong is this! — man's enemy!
As smoke blots the white fire, as clinging rust
Mars the bright mirror, as the womb surrounds
The babe unborn, so is the world of things
Foiled, soiled, enclosed in this desire of flesh.
The wise fall, caught in it; the unresting foe
It is of wisdom, wearing countless forms,
Fair but deceitful, subtle as a flame.
Sense, mind, and reason — these, O Kunti's son!
Are booty for it; in its play with these
It maddens man, beguiling, blinding him.
Therefore, thou noblest child of Bharata!
Govern thy heart! Constrain th' entangled sense!
Resist the false, soft sinfulness which saps
Knowledge and judgment! Yea, the world is strong,
But what discerns it stronger, and the mind
Strongest; and high o'er all the ruling Soul.
Wherefore, perceiving Him who reigns supreme,
Put forth full force of Soul in thy own soul!
Fight! vanquish foes and doubts, dear Hero! slay
What haunts thee in fond shapes, and would betray!

HERE ENDETH CHAPTER III. OF THE

BHAGAVAD-GĪTĀ,

Entitled "Karma-Yôg,"
Or "The Book of Virtue in Work."

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

CHAPTER IV

KRISHNA:

This deathless Yoga, this deep union,
I taught Vivaswata,[1] the Lord of Light;
Vivaswata to Manu gave it; he
To Ikshwâku; so passed it down the line
Of all my royal Rishis. Then, with years,
The truth grew dim and perished, noble Prince!
Now once again to thee it is declared —
This ancient lore, this mystery supreme —
Seeing I find thee votary and friend.

ARJUNA:

Thy birth, dear Lord, was in these later days,
And bright Vivaswata's preceded time!
How shall I comprehend this thing thou sayest,
"From the beginning it was I who taught?"

KRISHNA:

Manifold the renewals of my birth
Have been, Arjuna! and of thy births, too!
But mine I know, and thine thou knowest not,
O Slayer of thy Foes! Albeit I be
Unborn, undying, indestructible,
The Lord of all things living; not the less —
By Maya, by my magic which I stamp
On floating Nature-forms, the primal vast —
I come, and go, and come. When Righteousness
Declines, O Bharata! when Wickedness
Is strong, I rise, from age to age, and take
Visible shape, and move a man with men,
Succoring the good, thrusting the evil back,
And setting Virtue on her seat again.
Who knows the truth touching my births on earth
And my divine work, when he quits the flesh
Puts on its load no more, falls no more down
To earthly birth: to Me he comes, dear Prince!

[1] A name of the sun.

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

Many there be who come! from fear set free,
From anger, from desire; keeping their hearts
Fixed upon me — my Faithful — purified
By sacred flame of Knowledge. Such as these
Mix with my being. Whoso worship me,
Them I exalt; but all men everywhere
Shall fall into my path; albeit, those souls
Which seek reward for works, make sacrifice
Now, to the lower gods. I say to thee
Here have they their reward. But I am He
Made the Four Castes, and portioned them a place
After their qualities and gifts. Yea, I
Created, the Reposeful; I that live
Immortally, made all those mortal births:
For works soil not my essence, being works
Wrought uninvolved.[1] Who knows me acting thus
Unchained by action, action binds not him;
And, so perceiving, all those saints of old
Worked, seeking for deliverance. Work thou
As, in the days gone by, thy fathers did.

Thou sayst, perplexed, It hath been asked before
By singers and by sages, "What is act,
And what inaction?" I will teach thee this,
And, knowing, thou shalt learn which work doth save.
Needs must one rightly meditate those three —
Doing, — not doing, — and undoing. Here
Thorny and dark the path is! He who sees
How action may be rest, rest action — he
Is wisest 'mid his kind; he hath the truth!
He doeth well, acting or resting. Freed
In all his works from prickings of desire,
Burned clean in act by the white fire of truth,
The wise call that man wise; and such an one,
Renouncing fruit of deeds, always content,
Always self-satisfying, if he works,
Doth nothing that shall stain his separate soul,
Which — quit of fear and hope — subduing self —
Rejecting outward impulse — yielding up
To body's need nothing save body, dwells
Sinless amid all sin, with equal calm
Taking what may befall, by grief unmoved,

[1] Without desire of fruit.

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

Unmoved by joy, unenvyingly; the same
In good and evil fortunes; nowise bound
By bond of deeds. Nay, but of such an one,
Whose crave is gone, whose soul is liberate,
Whose heart is set on truth — of such an one
What work he does is work of sacrifice,
Which passeth purely into ash and smoke
Consumed upon the altar! All's then God!
The sacrifice is Brahm, the ghee and grain
Are Brahm, the fire is Brahm, the flesh it eats
Is Brahm, and unto Brahm attaineth he
Who, in such office, meditates on Brahm.
Some votaries there be who serve the gods
With flesh and altar-smoke; but other some
Who, lighting subtler fires, make purer rite
With will of worship. Of the which be they
Who, in white flame of continence, consume
Joys of the sense, delights of eye and ear,
Foregoing tender speech and sound of song:
And they who, kindling fires with torch of Truth,
Burn on a hidden altar-stone the bliss
Of youth and love, renouncing happiness:
And they who lay for offering there their wealth,
Their penance, meditation, piety,
Their steadfast reading of the scrolls, their lore
Painfully gained with long austerities.
And they who, making silent sacrifice,
Draw in their breath to feed the flame of thought,
And breathe it forth to waft the heart on high,
Governing the ventage of each entering air
Lest one sigh pass which helpeth not the soul:
And they who, day by day denying needs,
Lay life itself upon the altar-flame,
Burning the body wan. Lo! all these keep
The rite of offering, as if they slew
Victims; and all thereby efface much sin.
Yea! and who feed on the immortal food
Left of such sacrifice, to Brahma pass,
To The Unending. But for him that makes
No sacrifice, he hath nor part nor lot
Even in the present world. How should he share
Another, O thou Glory of thy Line?

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

In sight of Brahma all these offerings
Are spread and are accepted! Comprehend
That all proceed by act; for knowing this,
Thou shalt be quit of doubt. The sacrifice
Which Knowledge pays is better than great gifts
Offered by wealth, since gifts' worth — O my Prince!
Lies in the mind which gives, the will that serves:
And these are gained by reverence, by strong search,
By humble heed of those who see the Truth
And teach it. Knowing Truth, thy heart no more
Will ache with error, for the Truth shall show
All things subdued to thee, as thou to Me.
Moreover, Son of Pandu! wert thou worst
Of all wrong-doers, this fair ship of Truth
Should bear thee safe and dry across the sea
Of thy transgressions. As the kindled flame
Feeds on the fuel till it sinks to ash,
So unto ash, Arjuna! unto nought
The flame of Knowledge wastes works' dross away!
There is no purifier like thereto
In all this world, and he who seeketh it
Shall find it — being grown perfect — in himself.
Believing, he receives it when the soul
Masters itself, and cleaves to Truth, and comes —
Possessing knowledge — to the higher peace,
The uttermost repose. But those untaught,
And those without full faith, and those who fear
Are shent; no peace is here or other where,
No hope, nor happiness for whoso doubts.
He that, being self-contained, hath vanquished doubt,
Disparting self from service, soul from works,
Enlightened and emancipate, my Prince!
Works fetter him no more! Cut then atwain
With sword of wisdom, Son of Bharata!
This doubt that binds thy heart-beats! cleave the bond
Born of thy ignorance! Be bold and wise!
Give thyself to the field with me! Arise!

HERE ENDETH CHAPTER IV. OF THE

BHAGAVAD-GĪTĀ,

Entitled "Jnana-Yôg,"
Or "The Book of the Religion of Knowledge."

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

CHAPTER V

ARJUNA:

Yet, Krishna! at the one time thou dost laud
Surcease of works, and, at another time,
Service through work. Of these twain plainly tell
Which is the better way?

KRISHNA:

To cease from works
Is well, and to do works in holiness
Is well; and both conduct to bliss supreme;
But of these twain the better way is his
Who working piously refraineth not.

That is the true Renouncer, firm and fixed,
Who — seeking nought, rejecting nought — dwells proof
Against the "opposites." [1] O valiant Prince!
In doing, such breaks lightly from all deed:
'Tis the new scholar talks as they were two,
This Sânkhya and this Yôga: wise men know
Who husbands one plucks golden fruit of both!
The region of high rest which Sânkhyans reach
Yogins attain. Who sees these twain as one
Sees with clear eyes! Yet such abstraction, Chief!
Is hard to win without much holiness.
Whoso is fixed in holiness, self-ruled,
Pure-hearted, lord of senses and of self,
Lost in the common life of all which lives —
A "Yôgayukt" — he is a Saint who wends
Straightway to Brahm. Such an one is not touched
By taint of deeds. "Nought of myself I do!"
Thus will he think — who holds the truth of truths —
In seeing, hearing, touching, smelling; when
He eats, or goes, or breathes; slumbers or talks,
Holds fast or loosens, opes his eyes or shuts;
Always assured "This is the sense-world plays

[1] That is, "joy and sorrow, success and failure, heat and cold," &c.

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

With senses." He that acts in thought of Brahm,
Detaching end from act, with act content,
The world of sense can no more stain his soul
Than waters mar th' enamelled lotus-leaf.
With life, with heart, with mind, — nay, with the help
Of all five senses — letting selfhood go —
Yogins toil ever towards their souls' release.
Such votaries, renouncing fruit of deeds,
Gain endless peace: the unvowed, the passion-bound,
Seeking a fruit from works, are fastened down.
The embodied sage, withdrawn within his soul,
At every act sits godlike in "the town
Which hath nine gateways," [1] neither doing aught
Nor causing any deed. This world's Lord makes
Neither the work, nor passion for the work,
Nor lust for fruit of work; the man's own self
Pushes to these! The Master of this World
Takes on himself the good or evil deeds
Of no man — dwelling beyond! Mankind errs here
By folly, darkening knowledge. But, for whom
That darkness of the soul is chased by light,
Splendid and clear shines manifest the Truth
As if a Sun of Wisdom sprang to shed
Its beams of dawn. Him meditating still,
Him seeking, with Him blended, stayed on Him,
The souls illuminated take that road
Which hath no turning back — their sins flung off
By strength of faith. [Who will may have this Light;
Who hath it sees.] To him who wisely sees,
The Brahman with his scrolls and sanctities,
The cow, the elephant, the unclean dog,
The Outcast gorging dog's meat, are all one.

The world is overcome — aye! even here!
By such as fix their faith on Unity.
The sinless Brahma dwells in Unity,
And they in Brahma. Be not over-glad
Attaining joy, and be not over-sad
Encountering grief, but, stayed on Brahma, still
Constant let each abide! The sage whose soul

[1] *I. e.*, the body.

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

Holds off from outer contacts, in himself
Finds bliss; to Brahma joined by piety,
His spirit tastes eternal peace. The joys
Springing from sense-life are but quickening wombs
Which breed sure griefs: those joys begin and end!
The wise mind takes no pleasure, Kunti's Son!
In such as those! But if a man shall learn,
Even while he lives and bears his body's chain,
To master lust and anger, he is blest!
He is the *Yukta*; he hath happiness,
Contentment, light, within: his life is merged
In Brahma's life; he doth Nirvâna touch!
Thus go the Rishis unto rest, who dwell
With sins effaced, with doubts at end, with hearts
Governed and calm. Glad in all good they live,
Nigh to the peace of God; and all those live
Who pass their days exempt from greed and wrath,
Subduing self and senses, knowing the Soul!

The Saint who shuts outside his placid soul
All touch of sense, letting no contact through;
Whose quiet eyes gaze straight from fixëd brows,
Whose outward breath and inward breath are drawn
Equal and slow through nostrils still and close;
That one — with organs, heart, and mind constrained,
Bent on deliverance, having put away
Passion, and fear, and rage; — hath, even now,
Obtained deliverance, ever and ever freed.
Yea! for he knows Me Who am He that heeds
The sacrifice and worship, God revealed;
And He who heeds not, being Lord of Worlds,
Lover of all that lives, God unrevealed,
Wherein who will shall find surety and shield!

HERE ENDS CHAPTER V. OF THE

BHAGAVAD-GĪTĀ,

Entitled "Karmasanyâsayog,"
Or "The Book of Religion by Renouncing Fruit of Works."

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

CHAPTER VI

KRISHNA:

Therefore, who doeth work rightful to do,
Not seeking gain from work, that man, O Prince!
Is Sânyasi and Yôgi — both in one!
And he is neither who lights not the flame
Of sacrifice, nor setteth hand to task.

Regard as true Renouncer him that makes
Worship by work, for who renounceth not
Works not as Yôgin. So is that well said
"By works the votary doth rise to saint,
And saintship is the ceasing from all works;"
Because the perfect Yôgin acts — but acts
Unmoved by passions and unbound by deeds,
Setting result aside.

Let each man raise
The Self by Soul, not trample down his Self,
Since Soul that is Self's friend may grow Self's foe.
Soul is Self's friend when Self doth rule o'er Self,
But Self turns enemy if Soul's own self
Hates Self as not itself.[1]

The sovereign soul
Of him who lives self-governed and at peace
Is centred in itself, taking alike
Pleasure and pain; heat, cold; glory and shame.
He is the Yôgi, he is *Yûkta*, glad
With joy of light and truth; dwelling apart
Upon a peak, with senses subjugate
Whereto the clod, the rock, the glistering gold
Show all as one. By this sign is he known
Being of equal grace to comrades, friends,
Chance-comers, strangers, lovers, enemies,
Aliens and kinsmen; loving all alike,
Evil or good.

[1] The Sanskrit has this play on the double meaning of *Âtman*.

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

Sequestered should he sit,
Steadfastly meditating, solitary,
His thoughts controlled, his passions laid away,
Quit of belongings. In a fair, still spot
Having his fixed abode, — not too much raised,
Nor yet too low, — let him abide, his goods
A cloth, a deerskin, and the Kuśa-grass.
There, setting hard his mind upon The One,
Restraining heart and senses, silent, calm,
Let him accomplish Yôga, and achieve
Pureness of soul, holding immovable
Body and neck and head, his gaze absorbed
Upon his nose-end,[1] rapt from all around,
Tranquil in spirit, free of fear, intent
Upon his Brahmacharya vow, devout,
Musing on Me, lost in the thought of Me.
That Yôgin, so devoted, so controlled,
Comes to the peace beyond, — My peace, the peace
Of high Nirvana!

But for earthly needs
Religion is not his who too much fasts
Or too much feasts, nor his who sleeps away
An idle mind; nor his who wears to waste
His strength in vigils. Nay, Arjuna! call
That the true piety which most removes
Earth-aches and ills, where one is moderate
In eating and in resting, and in sport;
Measured in wish and act; sleeping betimes,
Waking betimes for duty.

When the man,
So living, centres on his soul the thought
Straitly restrained — untouched internally
By stress of sense — then is he *Yûkta*. See!
Steadfast a lamp burns sheltered from the wind;
Such is the likeness of the Yôgi's mind
Shut from sense-storms and burning bright to Heaven.
When mind broods placid, soothed with holy wont;
When Self contemplates self, and in itself
Hath comfort; when it knows the nameless joy
Beyond all scope of sense, revealed to soul —

[1] So in original.

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

Only to soul! and, knowing, wavers not,
True to the farther Truth; when, holding this,
It deems no other treasure comparable,
But, harbored there, cannot be stirred or shook
By any gravest grief, call that state "peace,"
That happy severance Yôga; call that man
The perfect Yôgin'

Steadfastly the will
Must toil thereto, till efforts end in ease,
And thought has passed from thinking. Shaking off
All longings bred by dreams of fame and gain,
Shutting the doorways of the senses close
With watchful ward; so, step by step, it comes
To gift of peace assured and heart assuaged,
When the mind dwells self-wrapped, and the soul broods
Cumberless. But, as often as the heart
Breaks — wild and wavering — from control, so oft
Let him re-curb it, let him rein it back
To the soul's governance; for perfect bliss
Grows only in the bosom tranquillized,
The spirit passionless, purged from offence,
Vowed to the Infinite. He who thus vows
His soul to the Supreme Soul, quitting sin,
Passes unhindered to the endless bliss
Of unity with Brahma. He so vowed,
So blended, sees the Life-Soul resident
In all things living, and all living things
In that Life-Soul contained. And whoso thus
Discerneth Me in all, and all in Me,
I never let him go; nor looseneth he
Hold upon Me; but, dwell he where he may,
Whate'er his life, in Me he dwells and lives,
Because he knows and worships Me, Who dwell
In all which lives, and cleaves to Me in all.
Arjuna! if a man sees everywhere —
Taught by his own similitude — one Life,
One Essence in the Evil and the Good,
Hold him a Yôgi, yea! well-perfected!

ARJUNA:

Slayer of Madhu! yet again, this Yôg,
This Peace, derived from equanimity,

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

Made known by thee — I see no fixity
Therein, no rest, because the heart of men
Is unfixed, Krishna! rash, tumultuous,
Wilful and strong. It were all one, I think,
To hold the wayward wind, as tame man's heart.

KRISHNA:

Hero long-armed! beyond denial, hard
Man's heart is to restrain, and wavering;
Yet may it grow restrained by habit, Prince!
By wont of self-command. This Yôg, I say,
Cometh not lightly to th' ungoverned ones;
But he who will be master of himself
Shall win it, if he stoutly strive thereto.

ARJUNA:

And what road goeth he who, having faith,
Fails, Krishna! in the striving; falling back
From holiness, missing the perfect rule?
Is he not lost, straying from Brahma's light,
Like the vain cloud, which floats 'twixt earth and Heaven
When lightning splits it, and it vanisheth?
Fain would I hear thee answer me herein,
Since, Krishna! none save thou can clear the doubt.

KRISHNA:

He is not lost, thou Son of Prithâ! No!
Nor earth, nor heaven is forfeit, even for him,
Because no heart that holds one right desire
Treadeth the road of loss! He who should fail,
Desiring righteousness, cometh at death
Unto the Region of the Just; dwells there
Measureless years, and being born anew,
Beginneth life again in some fair home
Amid the mild and happy. It may chance
He doth descend into a Yôgin house
On Virtue's breast; but that is rare! Such birth
Is hard to be obtained on this earth, Chief!
So hath he back again what heights of heart
He did achieve, and so he strives anew
To perfectness, with better hope, dear Prince!

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

For by the old desire he is drawn on
Unwittingly; and only to desire
The purity of Yôga is to pass
Beyond the *Sabdabrahm*, the spoken Ved.
But, being Yôgi, striving strong and long,
Purged from transgressions, perfected by births
Following on births, he plants his feet at last
Upon the farther path. Such an one ranks
Above ascetics, higher than the wise,
Beyond achievers of vast deeds! Be thou
Yôgi, Arjuna! And of such believe,
Truest and best is he who worships Me
With inmost soul, stayed on My Mystery!

HERE ENDETH CHAPTER VI. OF THE

BHAGAVAD-GĪTĀ,

Entitled "Atmasanyamayôg,"
Or "The Book of Religion by Self-Restraint."

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

CHAPTER VII

KRISHNA:

Learn now, dear Prince! how, if thy soul be set
Ever on Me — still exercising Yôg,
Still making Me thy Refuge — thou shalt come
Most surely unto perfect hold of Me.
I will declare to thee that utmost lore,
Whole and particular, which, when thou knowest,
Leaveth no more to know here in this world.

Of many thousand mortals, one, perchance,
Striveth for Truth; and of those few that strive —
Nay, and rise high — one only — here and there —
Knoweth Me, as I am, the very Truth.

Earth, water, flame, air, ether, life, and mind,
And individuality — those eight
Make up the showing of Me, Manifest.

These be my lower Nature; learn the higher,
Whereby, thou Valiant One! this Universe
Is, by its principle of life, produced;
Whereby the worlds of visible things are born
As from a *Yoni*. Know! I am that womb.
I make and I unmake this Universe:
Than me there is no other Master, Prince!
No other Maker! All these hang on me
As hangs a row of pearls upon its string.
I am the fresh taste of the water; I
The silver of the moon, the gold o' the sun,
The word of worship in the Veds, the thrill
That passeth in the ether, and the strength
Of man's shed seed. I am the good sweet smell
Of the moistened earth, I am the fire's red light,
The vital air moving in all which moves,
The holiness of hallowed souls, the root
Undying, whence hath sprung whatever is;
The wisdom of the wise, the intellect

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

Of the informed, the greatness of the great,
The splendor of the splendid. Kunti's Son!
These am I, free from passion and desire;
Yet am I right desire in all who yearn,
Chief of the Bhâratas! for all those moods,
Soothfast, or passionate, or ignorant,
Which Nature frames, deduce from me; but all
Are merged in me — not I in them! The world —
Deceived by those three qualities of being —
Wotteth not Me Who am outside them all,
Above them all, Eternal! Hard it is
To pierce that veil divine of various shows
Which hideth Me; yet they who worship Me
Pierce it and pass beyond.
I am not known
To evil-doers, nor to foolish ones,
Nor to the base and churlish; nor to those
Whose mind is cheated by the show of things,
Nor those that take the way of Asuras.[1]

Four sorts of mortals know me: he who weeps,
Arjuna! and the man who yearns to know;
And he who toils to help; and he who sits
Certain of me, enlightened.
Of these four,
O Prince of India! highest, nearest, best
That last is, the devout soul, wise, intent
Upon "The One." Dear, above all, am I
To him; and he is dearest unto me!
All four are good, and seek me; but mine own,
The true of heart, the faithful — stayed on me,
Taking me as their utmost blessedness,
They are not "mine," but I — even I myself!
At end of many births to Me they come!
Yet hard the wise Mahatma is to find,
That man who sayeth, "All is Vâsudev!"[2]

There be those, too, whose knowledge, turned aside
By this desire or that, gives them to serve
Some lower gods, with various rites, constrained
By that which mouldeth them. Unto all such —

[1] Beings of low and devilish nature.

[2] Krishna.

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

Worship what shrine they will, what shapes, in faith —
'Tis I who give them faith! I am content!
The heart thus asking favor from its God,
Darkened but ardent, hath the end it craves,
The lesser blessing — but 'tis I who give!
Yet soon is withered what small fruit they reap:
Those men of little minds, who worship so,
Go where they worship, passing with their gods.
But Mine come unto me! Blind are the eyes
Which deem th' Unmanifested manifest,
Not comprehending Me in my true Self!
Imperishable, viewless, undeclared,
Hidden behind my magic veil of shows,
I am not seen by all; I am not known —
Unborn and changeless — to the idle world.
But I, Arjuna! know all things which were,
And all which are, and all which are to be,
Albeit not one among them knoweth Me!

By passion for the "pairs of opposites,"
By those twain snares of Like and Dislike, Prince!
All creatures live bewildered, save some few
Who, quit of sins, holy in act, informed,
Freed from the "opposites," and fixed in faith,
Cleave unto Me.

Who cleave, who seek in Me
Refuge from birth [1] and death, those have the Truth!
Those know Me BRAHMA; know Me Soul of Souls,
The ADHYÂTMAN; know KARMA, my work;
Know I am ADHIBHÛTA, Lord of Life,
And ADHIDAIVA, Lord of all the Gods
And ADHIYAJNA, Lord of Sacrifice;
Worship Me well, with hearts of love and faith,
And find and hold Me in the hour of death.

HERE ENDETH CHAPTER VII. OF THE

BHAGAVAD-GĪTĀ,

Entitled "Vijnânayôg,"
Or "The Book of Religion by Discernment."

[1] I read here *janma*, "birth;" not *jara*, "age."

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

CHAPTER VIII

ARJUNA:

Who is that BRAHMA? What that Soul of Souls,
The ADHYÂTMAN? What, Thou Best of All!
Thy work, the KARMA? Tell me what it is
Thou namest ADHIBHÛTA? What again
Means ADHIDAIVA? Yea, and how it comes
Thou canst be ADHIYAJNA in thy flesh?
Slayer of Madhu! Further, make me know
How good men find thee in the hour of death?

KRISHNA:

I BRAHMA am! the One Eternal GOD,
And ADHYÂTMAN is My Being's name,
The Soul of Souls! What goeth forth from Me,
Causing all life to live, is KARMA called:
And, Manifested in divided forms,
I am the ADHIBHÛTA, Lord of Lives;
And ADHIDAIVA, Lord of all the Gods,
Because I am PURUSHA, who begets.
And ADHIYAJNA, Lord of Sacrifice,
I — speaking with thee in this body here —
Am, thou embodied one! (for all the shrines
Flame unto Me!) And, at the hour of death,
He that hath meditated Me alone,
In putting off his flesh, comes forth to Me,
Enters into My Being — doubt thou not!
But, if he meditated otherwise
At hour of death, in putting off the flesh,
He goes to what he looked for, Kunti's Son!
Because the Soul is fashioned to its like.

Have Me, then, in thy heart always! and fight!
Thou too, when heart and mind are fixed on Me,
Shalt surely come to Me! All come who cleave
With never-wavering will of firmest faith,
Owning none other Gods: all come to Me,
The Uttermost, Purusha, Holiest!

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

Whoso hath known Me, Lord of sage and singer,
Ancient of days; of all the Three Worlds Stay,
Boundless, — but unto every atom Bringer
Of that which quickens it: whoso, I say,

Hath known My form, which passeth mortal knowing;
Seen my effulgence — which no eye hath seen —
Than the sun's burning gold more brightly glowing,
Dispersing darkness, — unto him hath been

Right life! And, in the hour when life is ending,
With mind set fast and trustful piety,
Drawing still breath beneath calm brows unbending,
In happy peace that faithful one doth die, —

In glad peace passeth to Purusha's heaven,
The place which they who read the Vedas name
AKSHARAM, "Ultimate;" whereto have striven
Saints and ascetics — their road is the same.

That way — the highest way — goes he who shuts
The gates of all his senses, locks desire
Safe in his heart, centres the vital airs
Upon his parting thought, steadfastly set;
And, murmuring OM, the sacred syllable —
Emblem of BRAHM — dies, meditating Me.

For who, none other Gods regarding, looks
Ever to Me, easily am I gained
By such a Yôgi; and, attaining Me,
They fall not — those Mahatmas — back to birth,
To life, which is the place of pain, which ends,
But take the way of utmost blessedness.

The worlds, Arjuna! — even Brahma's world —
Roll back again from Death to Life's unrest;
But they, O Kunti's Son! that reach to Me,
Taste birth no more. If ye know Brahma's Day
Which is a thousand Yugas; if ye know
The thousand Yugas making Brahma's Night,
Then know ye Day and Night as He doth know!
When that vast Dawn doth break, th' Invisible

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

Is brought anew into the Visible;
When that deep Night doth darken, all which is
Fades back again to Him Who sent it forth;
Yea! this vast company of living things —
Again and yet again produced — expires
At Brahma's Nightfall; and, at Brahma's Dawn,
Riseth, without its will, to life new-born.
But — higher, deeper, innermost — abides
Another Life, not like the life of sense,
Escaping sight, unchanging. This endures
When all created things have passed away;
This is that Life named the Unmanifest,
The Infinite! the All! the Uttermost.
Thither arriving none return. That Life
Is Mine, and I am there! And, Prince! by faith
Which wanders not, there is a way to come
Thither. I, the PURUSHA, I Who spread
The Universe around me — in Whom dwell
All living Things — may so be reached and seen!
. . . . .[1]

Richer than holy fruit on Vedas growing,
Greater than gifts, better than prayer or fast,
Such wisdom is! The Yôgi, this way knowing,
Comes to the Utmost Perfect Peace at last.

HERE ENDETH CHAPTER VIII. OF THE

BHAGAVAD-GĪTĀ,

Entitled "Aksharaparabrahmayôg,"
Or "The Book of Religion by Devotion to the One Supreme God."

[1] I have discarded ten lines of Sanskrit text here as an undoubted interpolation by some Vedantist.

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

CHAPTER IX

KRISHNA:

Now will I open unto thee — whose heart
Rejects not — that last lore, deepest-concealed,
That farthest secret of My Heavens and Earths,
Which but to know shall set thee free from ills, —
A Royal lore! a Kingly mystery!
Yea! for the soul such light as purgeth it
From every sin; a light of holiness
With inmost splendor shining; plain to see;
Easy to walk by, inexhaustible!

They that receive not this, failing in faith
To grasp the greater wisdom, reach not Me,
Destroyer of thy foes! They sink anew
Into the realm of Flesh, where all things change!

By Me the whole vast Universe of things
Is spread abroad; — by Me, the Unmanifest!
In Me are all existences contained;
Not I in them!

Yet they are not contained,
Those visible things! Receive and strive to embrace
The mystery majestical! My Being —
Creating all, sustaining all — still dwells
Outside of all!

See! as the shoreless airs
Move in the measureless space, but are not space,
[And space were space without the moving airs];
So all things are in Me, but are not I.

At closing of each Kalpa, Indian Prince!
All things which be back to My Being come:
At the beginning of each Kalpa, all
Issue new-born from Me.

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

By Energy
And help of Prakritî, my outer Self,
Again, and yet again, I make go forth
The realms of visible things — without their will —
All of them — by the power of Prakritî.

Yet these great makings, Prince! involve Me not,
Enchain Me not! I sit apart from them,
Other, and Higher, and Free; nowise attached!

Thus doth the stuff of worlds, moulded by Me,
Bring forth all that which is, moving or still,
Living or lifeless! Thus the worlds go on!

The minds untaught mistake Me, veiled in form; —
Nought see they of My secret Presence, nought
Of My hid Nature, ruling all which lives.
Vain hopes pursuing, vain deeds doing; fed
On vainest knowledge, senselessly they seek
An evil way, the way of brutes and fiends.
But My Mahatmas, those of noble soul
Who tread the path celestial, worship Me
With hearts unwandering, — knowing Me the Source,
Th' Eternal Source, of Life. Unendingly
They glorify Me; seek Me; keep their vows
Of reverence and love, with changeless faith
Adoring Me. Yea, and those too adore,
Who, offering sacrifice of wakened hearts,
Have sense of one pervading Spirit's stress,
One Force in every place, though manifold!
I am the Sacrifice! I am the Prayer!
I am the Funeral-Cake set for the dead!
I am the healing herb! I am the ghee,
The Mantra, and the flame, and that which burns!
I am — of all this boundless Universe —
The Father, Mother, Ancestor, and Guard!
The end of Learning! That which purifies
In lustral water! I am Om! I am
Rig-Veda, Sama-Veda, Yajur-Ved;
The Way, the Fosterer, the Lord, the Judge,
The Witness; the Abode, the Refuge-House,
The Friend, the Fountain and the Sea of Life

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

Which sends, and swallows up; Treasure of Worlds
And Treasure-Chamber! Seed and Seed-Sower,
Whence endless harvests spring! Sun's heat is mine;
Heaven's rain is mine to grant or to withhold;
Death am I, and Immortal Life I am,
Arjuna! SAT and ASAT, Visible Life,
And Life Invisible!

Yea! those who learn
The threefold Veds, who drink the Soma-wine,
Purge sins, pay sacrifice — from Me they earn
Passage to Swarga; where the meats divine
Of great gods feed them in high Indra's heaven.
Yet they, when that prodigious joy is o'er,
Paradise spent, and wage for merits given,
Come to the world of death and change once more.

They had their recompense! they stored their treasure,
Following the threefold Scripture and its writ;
Who seeketh such gaineth the fleeting pleasure
Of joy which comes and goes! I grant them it!

But to those blessèd ones who worship Me,
Turning not otherwhere, with minds set fast,
I bring assurance of full bliss beyond.

Nay, and of hearts which follow other gods
In simple faith, their prayers arise to me,
O Kunti's Son! though they pray wrongfully;
For I am the Receiver and the Lord
Of every sacrifice, which these know not
Rightfully; so they fall to earth again!
Who follow gods go to their gods; who vow
Their souls to Pitris go to Pitris; minds
To evil Bhûts given o'er sink to the Bhûts;
And whoso loveth Me cometh to Me.
Whoso shall offer Me in faith and love
A leaf, a flower, a fruit, water poured forth,
That offering I accept, lovingly made
With pious will. Whate'er thou doest, Prince!
Eating or sacrificing, giving gifts,
Praying or fasting, let it all be done

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

For Me, as Mine. So shalt thou free thyself
From *Karmabandh*, the chain which holdeth men
To good and evil issue, so shalt come
Safe unto Me — when thou art quit of flesh —
By faith and abdication joined to Me!

I am alike for all! I know not hate,
I know not favor! What is made is Mine!
But them that worship Me with love, I love;
They are in Me, and I in them!

Nay, Prince!
If one of evil life turn in his thought
Straightly to Me, count him amidst the good;
He hath the high way chosen; he shall grow
Righteous ere long; he shall attain that peace
Which changes not. Thou Prince of India!
Be certain none can perish, trusting Me!
O Prithâ's Son! whoso will turn to Me,
Though they be born from the very womb of Sin,
Woman or man; sprung of the Vaiśya caste
Or lowly disregarded Sudra, — all
Plant foot upon the highest path; how then
The holy Brahmans and My Royal Saints?
Ah! ye who into this ill world are come —
Fleeting and false — set your faith fast on Me!
Fix heart and thought on Me! Adore Me! Bring
Offerings to Me! Make Me prostrations! Make
Me your supremest joy! and, undivided,
Unto My rest your spirits shall be guided.

HERE ENDS CHAPTER IX. OF THE

BHAGAVAD-GĪTĀ,

Entitled "Râjavidyârajaguhyayôg,"
Or "The Book of Religion by the Kingly Knowledge and the Kingly Mystery."

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

CHAPTER X

KRISHNA:[1]

Hear farther yet, thou Long-Armed Lord! these latest words I say —
Uttered to bring thee bliss and peace, who lovest Me alway —
Not the great company of gods nor kingly Rishis know
My Nature, Who have made the gods and Rishis long ago;
He only knoweth — only he is free of sin, and wise,
Who seeth Me, Lord of the Worlds, with faith-enlightened eyes,
Unborn, undying, unbegun. Whatever Natures be
To mortal men distributed, those natures spring from Me!
Intellect, skill, enlightenment, endurance, self-control,
Truthfulness, equability, and grief or joy of soul,
And birth and death, and fearfulness, and fearlessness, and shame,
And honor, and sweet harmlessness,[2] and peace which is the same
Whate'er befalls, and mirth, and tears, and piety, and thrift,
And wish to give, and will to help, — all cometh of My gift!
The Seven Chief Saints, the Elders Four, the Lordly Manus set —
Sharing My work — to rule the worlds, these too did I beget;
And Rishis, Pitris, Manus, all, by one thought of My mind;
Thence did arise, to fill this world, the races of mankind;
Wherefrom who comprehends My Reign of mystic Majesty —
That truth of truths — is thenceforth linked in faultless faith to Me:
Yea! knowing Me the source of all, by Me all creatures wrought,
The wise in spirit cleave to Me, into My Being brought;
Hearts fixed on Me; breaths breathed to Me; praising Me, each to each,
So have they happiness and peace, with pious thought and speech;
And unto these — thus serving well, thus loving ceaselessly —
I give a mind of perfect mood, whereby they draw to Me;
And, all for love of them, within their darkened souls I dwell,
And, with bright rays of wisdom's lamp, their ignorance dispel.

ARJUNA:

Yes! Thou art Parabrahm! The High Abode!
The Great Purification! Thou art God
Eternal, All-creating, Holy, First,

[1] The Sanskrit poem here rises to an elevation of style and manner which I have endeavored to mark by change of metre.

[2] Ahinsâ.

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

Without beginning! Lord of Lords and Gods!
Declared by all the Saints — by Narada,
Vyâsa, Asita, and Devala;
And here Thyself declaring unto me!
What Thou hast said now know I to be truth,
O Keśava! that neither gods nor men
Nor demons comprehend Thy mystery
Made manifest, Divinest! Thou Thyself
Thyself alone dost know, Maker Supreme!
Master of all the living! Lord of Gods!
King of the Universe! To Thee alone
Belongs to tell the heavenly excellence
Of those perfections wherewith Thou dost fill
These worlds of Thine; Pervading, Immanent!
How shall I learn, Supremest Mystery!
To know Thee, though I muse continually?
Under what form of Thine unnumbered forms
Mayst Thou be grasped? Ah! yet again recount,
Clear and complete, Thy great appearances,
The secrets of Thy Majesty and Might,
Thou High Delight of Men! Never enough
Can mine ears drink the Amrit [1] of such words!

KRISHNA:

Hanta! So be it! Kuru Prince! I will to thee unfold
Some portions of My Majesty, whose powers are manifold!
I am the Spirit seated deep in every creature's heart;
From Me they come; by Me they live; at My word they depart!
Vishnu of the Âdityas I am, those Lords of Light;
Marîtchi of the Maruts, the Kings of Storm and Blight;
By day I gleam, the golden Sun of burning cloudless Noon;
By Night, amid the asterisms I glide, the dappled Moon!
Of Vedas I am Sâma-Ved, of gods in Indra's Heaven
Vâsava; of the faculties to living beings given
The mind which apprehends and thinks; of Rudras Śankara;
Of Yakshas and of Râkshasas, Vittesh; and Pâvaka
Of Vasus, and of mountain-peaks Meru; Vrihaspati
Know Me 'mid planetary Powers; 'mid Warriors heavenly
Skanda; of all the water-floods the Sea which drinketh each,
And Bhrigu of the holy Saints, and OM of sacred speech;

[1] The nectar of immortality.

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

Of prayers the prayer ye whisper;[1] of hills Himâla's snow,
And Aswattha, the fig-tree, of all the trees that grow;
Of the Devarshis, Narada; and Chitrarath of them
That sing in Heaven, and Kapila of Munis, and the gem
Of flying steeds, Uchchaisravas, from Amrit-wave which burst;
Of elephants Airâvata; of males the Best and First;
Of weapons Heav'n's hot thunderbolt; of cows white Kâmadhuk,
From whose great milky udder-teats all hearts' desires are strook;
Vâsuki of the serpent-tribes, round Mandara entwined;
And thousand-fanged Ananta, on whose broad coils reclined
Leans Vishnu; and of water-things Varuna; Aryam
Of Pitris, and, of those that judge, Yama the Judge I am;
Of Daityas dread Prahlâda; of what metes days and years,
Time's self I am; of woodland-beasts — buffaloes, deers, and bears —
The lordly-painted tiger; of birds the vast Garûd,
The whirlwind 'mid the winds; 'mid chiefs Rama with blood imbrued,
Makar 'mid fishes of the sea, and Ganges 'mid the streams;
Yea! First, and Last, and Centre of all which is or seems
I am, Arjuna! Wisdom Supreme of what is wise,
Words on the uttering lips I am, and eyesight of the eyes,
And "A" of written characters, Dwandwa[2] of knitted speech,
And Endless Life, and boundless Love, whose power sustaineth each;
And bitter Death which seizes all, and joyous sudden Birth,
Which brings to light all beings that are to be on earth;
And of the viewless virtues, Fame, Fortune, Song am I,
And Memory, and Patience; and Craft, and Constancy:
Of Vedic hymns the Vrihatsâm, of metres Gayatrî,
Of months the Mârgasirsha, of all the seasons three
The flower-wreathed Spring; in dicer's-play the conquering Double-Eight;
The splendor of the splendid, and the greatness of the great,
Victory I am, and Action! and the goodness of the good,
And Vâsudev of Vrishni's race, and of this Pandu brood
Thyself! — Yea, my Arjuna! thyself; for thou art Mine!
Of poets Uśana, of saints Vyâsa, sage divine;
The policy of conquerors, the potency of kings,
The great unbroken silence in learning's secret things;
The lore of all the learnèd, the seed of all which springs.
Living or lifeless, still or stirred, whatever beings be,
None of them is in all the worlds, but it exists by Me!
Nor tongue can tell, Arjuna! nor end of telling come

[1] Called "The Jap."
[2] The compound form of Sanskrit words.

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

Of these My boundless glories, whereof I teach thee some;
For wheresoe'er is wondrous work, and majesty, and might,
From Me hath all proceeded. Receive thou this aright!
Yet how shouldst thou receive, O Prince! the vastness of this word?
I, who am all, and made it all, abide its separate Lord!

HERE ENDETH CHAPTER X. OF THE

BHAGAVAD-GĪTĀ,

Entitled "Vibhuti Yôg,"
Or "The Book of Religion by the Heavenly Perfections."

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

CHAPTER XI

ARJUNA:

This, for my soul's peace, have I heard from Thee,
The unfolding of the Mystery Supreme
Named Adhyâtman; comprehending which,
My darkness is dispelled; for now I know —
O Lotus-eyed![1] — whence is the birth of men,
And whence their death, and what the majesties
Of thine immortal rule. Fain would I see,
As thou Thyself declar'st it, Sovereign Lord!
The likeness of that glory of Thy Form
Wholly revealed. O Thou Divinest One!
If this can be, if I may bear the sight,
Make Thyself visible, Lord of all prayers!
Show me Thy very self, the Eternal God!

KRISHNA:

Gaze, then, thou Son of Prithâ! I manifest for thee
Those hundred thousand thousand shapes that clothe my Mystery:
I show thee all my semblances, infinite, rich, divine,
My changeful hues, my countless forms. See! in this face of mine,
Âdityas, Vasus, Rudras, Aświns, and Maruts; see
Wonders unnumbered, Indian Prince! revealed to none save thee.
Behold! this is the Universe! — Look! what is live and dead
I gather all in one — in Me! Gaze, as thy lips have said,
On GOD ETERNAL, VERY GOD! See ME! see what thou prayest!

. . . . . .

Thou canst not! — nor, with human eyes, Arjuna! ever mayest!
Therefore I give thee sense divine. Have other eyes, new light!
And, look! This is My glory, unveiled to mortal sight!

SANJAYA:

Then, O King! the God, so saying,
Stood, to Prithâ's Son displaying
All the splendor, wonder, dread

[1] "Kamalapatrâksha."

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

Of His vast Almighty-head.
Out of countless eyes beholding,
Out of countless mouths commanding,
Countless mystic forms enfolding
In one Form: supremely standing
Countless radiant glories wearing,
Countless heavenly weapons bearing,
Crowned with garlands of star-clusters,
Robed in garb of woven lustres,
Breathing from His perfect Presence
Breaths of all delicious essence
Of all sweetest odors; shedding
Blinding brilliance, overspreading —
Boundless, beautiful — all spaces
From His all-regarding faces;
So He showed! If there should rise
Suddenly within the skies
Sunburst of a thousand suns
Flooding earth with rays undeemed-of,
Then might be that Holy One's
Majesty and glory dreamed of!

So did Pandu's Son behold
All this universe enfold
All its huge diversity
Into one great shape, and be
Visible, and viewed, and blended
In one Body — subtle, splendid,
Nameless — th' All-comprehending
God of Gods, the Never-Ending
Deity!

But, sore amazed,
Thrilled, o'erfilled, dazzled, and dazed,
Arjuna knelt, and bowed his head,
And clasped his palms, and cried, and said:

ARJUNA:

Yea! I have seen! I see!
Lord! all is wrapped in Thee!
The gods are in Thy glorious frame! the creatures
Of earth, and heaven, and hell

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

In Thy Divine form dwell,
And in Thy countenance show all the features

Of Brahma, sitting lone
Upon His lotus-throne;
Of saints and sages, and the serpent races
Ananta, Vâsuki.
Yea! mightiest Lord! I see
Thy thousand thousand arms, and breasts, and faces,

And eyes, — on every side
Perfect, diversified;
And nowhere end of Thee, nowhere beginning,
Nowhere a centre! Shifts
Wherever soul's gaze lifts
Thy central Self, all-willing, and all-winning!

Infinite King! I see
The anadem on Thee,
The club, the shell, the discus; see Thee burning
In beams insufferable,
Lighting earth, heaven, and hell
With brilliance blinding, glorious, flashing, turning

Darkness to dazzling day,
Look I whichever way.
Ah, Lord! I worship Thee, the Undivided,
The Uttermost of thought,
The Treasure-Palace wrought
To hold the wealth of the worlds; the shield provided

To shelter Virtue's laws;
The Fount whence Life's stream draws
All waters of all rivers of all being:
The One Unborn, Unending:
Unchanging and unblending!
With might and majesty, past thought, past seeing!

Silver of moon and gold
Of sun are glances rolled
From Thy great eyes; Thy visage, beaming tender
Over the stars and skies,
Doth to warm life surprise
Thy Universe. The worlds are filled with wonder

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

Of Thy perfections! Space
Star-sprinkled, and the place
From pole to pole of the heavens, from bound to bound,
Hath Thee in every spot,
Thee, Thee! — Where Thou art not
O Holy, Marvellous Form! is nowhere found!

O Mystic, Awful One!
At sight of Thee, made known,
The Three Worlds quake; the lower gods draw nigh Thee;
They fold their palms, and bow
Body, and breast, and brow,
And, whispering worship, laud and magnify Thee!

Rishis and Siddhas cry
"Hail! Highest Majesty!"
From sage and singer breaks the hymn of glory
In holy melody,
Sounding the praise of Thee,
While countless companies take up the story,

Rudras, who ride the storms,
Th' Âdityas' shining forms,
Vasus and Sâdhyas, Viśwas, Ushmapas,
Maruts, and those great Twins,
The heavenly, fair Aświns,
Gandharvas, Rakshasas, Siddhas, Asuras, —

These see Thee, and revere
In silence-stricken fear;
Yea! the Worlds — seeing Thee with form stupendous,
With faces manifold,
With eyes which all behold,
Unnumbered eyes, vast arms, members tremendous,

Flanks, lit with sun and star,
Feet planted near and far,
Tushes of terror, mouths wrathful and tender; —
The Three wide Worlds before Thee
Adore, as I adore Thee,
Quake, as I quake, to witness so much splendor!

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

I mark Thee strike the skies
With front in wondrous wise
Huge, rainbow-painted, glittering; and thy mouth
Opened, and orbs which see
All things, whatever be,
In all Thy worlds, east, west, and north and south.

O Eyes of God! O Head!
My strength of soul is fled,
Gone is heart's force, rebuked is mind's desire!
When I behold Thee so,
With awful brows a-glow,
With burning glance, and lips lighted with fire,

Fierce as those flames which shall
Consume, at close of all,
Earth, Heaven! Ah me! I see no Earth and Heaven!
Thee, Lord of Lords! I see,
Thee only — only Thee!
Ah! let Thy mercy unto me be given!

Thou Refuge of the World!
Lo! to the cavern hurled
Of Thy wide-opened throat, and lips white-tushed,
I see our noblest ones,
Great Dhritarashtra's sons,
Bhishma, Drona, and Karna, caught and crushed!

The Kings and Chiefs drawn in,
That gaping gorge within;
The best of all both armies torn and riven!
Between Thy jaws they lie
Mangled fell bloodily,
Ground into dust and death! Like streams downdriven

With helpless haste, which go
In headlong furious flow
Straight to the gulfing maw of th' unfilled ocean,
So to that flaming cave
These heroes great and brave
Pour, in unending streams, with helpless motion!

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

Like moths which in the night
Flutter towards a light,
Drawn to their fiery doom, flying and dying,
So to their death still throng,
Blind, dazzled, borne along
Ceaselessly, all these multitudes, wild flying!

Thou, that hast fashioned men,
Devourest them agen,
One with another, great and small, alike!
The creatures whom Thou mak'st,
With flaming jaws Thou tak'st,
Lapping them up! Lord God! Thy terrors strike

From end to end of earth,
Filling life full, from birth
To death, with deadly, burning, lurid dread!
Ah, Vishnu! make me know
Why is Thy visage so?
Who art Thou, feasting thus upon Thy dead?

Who? awful Deity!
I bow myself to Thee,
Nâmostu Tê Devavara! Prasîd![1]
O Mightiest Lord! rehearse
Why hast Thou face so fierce?
Whence did this aspect horrible proceed?

KRISHNA:

Thou seest Me as Time who kills, Time who brings all to doom,
The Slayer Time, Ancient of Days, come hither to consume;
Excepting thee, of all these hosts of hostile chiefs arrayed,
There shines not one shall leave alive the battlefield! Dismayed
No longer be! Arise! obtain renown! destroy thy foes!
Fight for the kingdom waiting thee when thou hast vanquished those.
By Me they fall — not thee! the stroke of death is dealt them now,
Even as they stand thus gallantly; My instrument art thou!
Strike, strong-armed Prince! at Drona! at Bhishma strike! deal death
To Karna, Jayadratha; stay all this warlike breath!
'Tis I who bid them perish! Thou wilt but slay the slain.
Fight! they must fall, and thou must live, victor upon this plain!

[1] "Hail to Thee, God of Gods! Be favorable!"

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

SANJAYA:

Hearing mighty Keshav's word,
Tremblingly that helmèd Lord
Clasped his lifted palms, and — praying
Grace of Krishna — stood there, saying,
With bowed brow and accents broken,
These words, timorously spoken:

ARJUNA:

Worthily, Lord of Might!
The whole world hath delight
In Thy surpassing power, obeying Thee;
The Rakshasas, in dread
At sight of Thee, are sped
To all four quarters; and the company

Of Siddhas sound Thy name.
How should they not proclaim
Thy Majesties, Divinest, Mightiest?
Thou Brahm, than Brahma greater!
Thou Infinite Creator!
Thou God of gods, Life's Dwelling-place and Rest!

Thou, of all souls the Soul!
The Comprehending Whole!
Of Being formed, and formless Being the Framer;
O Utmost One! O Lord!
Older than eld, Who stored
The worlds with wealth of life. O Treasure-claimer

Who wottest all, and art
Wisdom Thyself! O Part
In all, and all, for all from Thee have risen!
Numberless now I see
The aspects are of Thee!
Vayu [1] Thou art, and He who keeps the prison

Of Narak, Yama dark,
And Agni's shining spark.
Varuna's waves are Thy waves. Moon and starlight

[1] The wind.

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

Are Thine! Prajâpati
Art Thou, and 'tis to Thee
Men kneel in worshipping the old world's far light,

The first of mortal men.
Again, Thou God! again
A thousand thousand times be magnified!
Honor and worship be —
Glory and praise, — to Thee
Namô, Namastê, cried on every side.

Cried here, above, below,
Uttered when Thou dost go,
Uttered when Thou dost come! *Namô!* we call.
Namôstu! God adored!
Namôstu! Nameless Lord!
Hail to Thee! Praise to Thee! Thou One in all.

For Thou art All! Yea, Thou!
Ah! if in anger now
Thou shouldst remember I did think Thee Friend,
Speaking with easy speech,
As men use each to each;
Did call Thee "Krishna," "Prince," nor comprehend

Thy hidden majesty,
The might, the awe of Thee;
Did, in my heedlessness, or in my love,
On journey, or in jest,
Or when we lay at rest,
Sitting at council, straying in the grove,

Alone, or in the throng,
Do Thee, most Holy! wrong,
Be Thy grace granted for that witless sin!
For Thou art, now I know,
Father of all below,
Of all above, of all the worlds within,

Guru of Gurus, more
To reverence and adore
Than all which is adorable and high!

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

How, in the wide worlds three
Should any equal be?
Shall any other share Thy majesty?

Therefore, with body bent
And reverent intent,
I praise, and serve, and seek Thee, asking grace.
As father to a son,
As friend to friend, as one
Who loveth to his lover, turn Thy face

In gentleness on me!
Good is it I did see
This unknown marvel of Thy Form! But fear
Mingles with joy! Retake,
Dear Lord! for pity's sake
Thine earthly shape, which earthly eyes may bear!

Be merciful, and show
The visage that I know;
Let me regard Thee, as of yore, arrayed
With disc and forehead-gem,
With mace and anadem,
Thou who sustainest all things! Undismayed

Let me once more behold
The form I loved of old,
Thou of the thousand arms and countless eyes!
My frightened heart is fain
To see restored again
The Charioteer, my Krishna's kind disguise.

KRISHNA:

Yea! thou hast seen, Arjuna! because I loved thee well,
The secret countenance of Me, revealed by mystic spell,
Shining, and wonderful, and vast, majestic, manifold,
Which none save thou in all the years had favor to behold;
For not by Vedas cometh this, nor sacrifice, nor alms,
Nor works well-done, nor penance long, nor prayers, nor chaunted psalms,
That mortal eyes should bear to view the Immortal Soul unclad,
Prince of the Kurus! This was kept for thee alone! Be glad!

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

Let no more trouble shake thy heart because thine eyes have seen
My terror with My glory. As I before have been
So will I be again for thee; with lightened heart behold!
Once more I am thy Krishna, the form thou knew'st of old!

SANJAYA:

These words to Arjuna spake
Vâsudev, and straight did take
Back again the semblance dear
Of the well-loved charioteer;
Peace and joy it did restore
When the Prince beheld once more
Mighty BRAHMA'S form and face
Clothed in Krishna's gentle grace.

ARJUNA:

Now that I see come back, Janardana!
This friendly human frame, my mind can think
Calm thoughts once more; my heart beats still again!

KRISHNA:

Yea! it was wonderful and terrible
To view me as thou didst, dear Prince! The gods
Dread and desire continually to view!
Yet not by Vedas, nor from sacrifice,
Nor penance, nor gift-giving, nor with prayer
Shall any so behold, as thou hast seen!
Only by fullest service, perfect faith,
And uttermost surrender am I known
And seen, and entered into, Indian Prince!
Who doeth all for Me; who findeth Me
In all; adoreth always; loveth all
Which I have made, and Me, for Love's sole end,
That man, Arjuna! unto Me doth wend.

HERE ENDETH CHAPTER XI. OF THE

BHAGAVAD-GĪTĀ,

Entitled "Viśwarupdarśanam,"
Or "The Book of the Manifesting of the One and Manifold."

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

CHAPTER XII

ARJUNA:

Lord! of the men who serve Thee — true in heart —
As God revealed; and of the men who serve,
Worshipping Thee Unrevealed, Unbodied, far,
Which take the better way of faith and life?

KRISHNA:

Whoever serve Me — as I show Myself —
Constantly true, in full devotion fixed,
These hold I very holy. But who serve —
Worshipping Me The One, The Invisible,
The Unrevealed, Unnamed, Unthinkable,
Uttermost, All-pervading, Highest, Sure —
Who thus adore Me, mastering their sense,
Of one set mind to all, glad in all good,
These blessed souls come unto Me.
Yet, hard
The travail is for whoso bend their minds
To reach th' Unmanifest. That viewless path
Shall scarce be trod by man bearing his flesh!
But whereso any doeth all his deeds,
Renouncing self in Me, full of Me, fixed
To serve only the Highest, night and day
Musing on Me — him will I swiftly lift
Forth from life's ocean of distress and death
Whose soul clings fast to Me. Cling thou to Me!
Clasp Me with heart and mind! so shalt thou dwell
Surely with Me on high. But if thy thought
Droops from such height; if thou be'st weak to set
Body and soul upon Me constantly,
Despair not! give Me lower service! seek
To read Me, worshipping with steadfast will;
And, if thou canst not worship steadfastly,
Work for Me, toil in works pleasing to Me!
For he that laboreth right for love of Me
Shall finally attain! But, if in this
Thy faint heart fails, bring Me thy failure! find

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

Refuge in Me! let fruits of labor go,
Renouncing all for me, with lowliest heart,
So shalt thou come; for, though to know is more
Than diligence, yet worship better is
Than knowing, and renouncing better still.
Near to renunciation — very near —
Dwelleth Eternal Peace!
Who hateth nought
Of all which lives, living himself benign,
Compassionate, from arrogance exempt,
Exempt from love of self, unchangeable
By good or ill; patient, contented, firm
In faith, mastering himself, true to his word,
Seeking Me, heart and soul; vowed unto Me, —
That man I love! Who troubleth not his kind,
And is not troubled by them; clear of wrath,
Living too high for gladness, grief, or fear,
That man I love! Who, dwelling quiet-eyed,[1]
Stainless, serene, well-balanced, unperplexed,
Working with Me, yet from all works detached,
That man I love! Who, fixed in faith on Me,
Dotes upon none, scorns none; rejoices not,
And grieves not, letting good and evil hap
Light when it will, and when it will depart,
That man I love! Who, unto friend and foe
Keeping an equal heart, with equal mind
Bears shame and glory, with an equal peace
Takes heat and cold, pleasure and pain; abides
Quit of desires, hears praise or calumny
In passionless restraint, unmoved by each,
Linked by no ties to earth, steadfast in Me,
That man I love! But most of all I love
Those happy ones to whom 'tis life to live
In single fervid faith and love unseeing,
Eating the blessèd Amrit of my Being!

HERE ENDETH CHAPTER XII. OF THE

BHAGAVAD-GĪTĀ,

Entitled "Bhaktiyôgô,"
Or "The Book of the Religion of Faith."

[1] "Not peering about," — *anapeksha.*

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

CHAPTER XIII

ARJUNA:

Now would I hear, O gracious Keśava![1]
Of Life which seems, and Soul beyond, which sees,
And what it is we know — or seem to know.

KRISHNA:

Yea! Son of Kunti! for this flesh ye see
Is *Kshetra*, is the field where Life disports;
And that which views and knows it is the Soul,
Kshetrajna. In all "fields," thou Indian prince!
I am *Kshetrajna*. I am what surveys!
Only that knowledge knows which knows the known
By the knower![2] What it is, that "field" of life,
What qualities it hath, and whence it is,
And why it changeth, and the faculty
That wotteth it, the mightiness of this,
And how it wotteth — hear these things from Me!
. . . . . .[3]

The elements, the conscious life, the mind,
The unseen vital force, the nine great gates
Of the body, or the five domains of sense,
Desire, dislike, pleasure and pain, and thought
Deep-woven, and persistency of being;
These all are wrought on matter by the Soul!

Humbleness, truthfulness, and harmlessness,
Patience and honor, reverence for the wise,
Purity, constancy, control of self,
Contempt of sense-delights, self-sacrifice,
Perception of the certitude of ill
In birth, death, aye, disease, suffering, and sin;

[1] The Calcutta edition of the Mahábhárata has these opening lines.
[2] This is the nearest possible version of
Kshetrakshetrajnayorjnánan yat tajjnánam matan mama.
[3] I omit two lines of the Sanskrit here, evidently interpolated by some Vedantist.

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

Detachment, lightly holding unto home,
Children, and wife, and all that bindeth men;
An ever-tranquil heart in fortunes good
And fortunes evil, with a will set firm
To worship Me — Me only! ceasing not;
Loving all solitudes, and shunning noise
Of foolish crowds; endeavors resolute
To reach perception of the Utmost Soul,
And grace to understand what gain it were
So to attain, — this is true Wisdom, Prince!
And what is otherwise is ignorance!

Now will I speak of knowledge best to know —
That Truth which giveth man Amrit to drink,
The Truth of HIM, the Para-Brahm, the All,
The Uncreated; not *Asat*, not *Sat*,
Not Form, nor the Unformed; yet both, and more; —
Whose hands are everywhere, and everywhere
Planted His feet, and everywhere His eyes
Beholding, and His ears in every place
Hearing, and all His faces everywhere
Enlightening and encompassing His worlds.
Glorified by the senses He hath given,
Yet beyond sense He is; sustaining all,
He dwelleth unattached: of forms and modes
Master, yet neither form nor mode hath He;
He is within all beings — and without —
Motionless, yet still moving; not discerned
For subtlety of instant presence; close
To all, to each, yet measurelessly far!
Not manifold, and yet subsisting still
In all which lives; for ever to be known
As the Sustainer, yet, at the End of Times,
He maketh all to end — and re-creates.
The Light of Lights He is, in the heart of the Dark
Shining eternally. Wisdom He is
And Wisdom's way, and Guide of all the wise,
Planted in every heart.
So have I told
Of Life's stuff, and the moulding, and the lore
To comprehend. Whoso, adoring Me,
Perceiveth this, shall surely come to Me!

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

Know thou that Nature and the Spirit both
Have no beginning! Know that qualities
And changes of them are by Nature wrought;
That Nature puts to work the acting frame,
But Spirit doth inform it, and so cause
Feeling of pain and pleasure. Spirit, linked
To moulded matter, entereth into bond
With qualities by Nature framed, and, thus
Married to matter, breeds the birth again
In good or evil *yonis*.[1]
Yet is this —
Yea! in its bodily prison! — Spirit pure,
Spirit supreme; surveying, governing,
Guarding, possessing; Lord and Master still
PURUSHA, Ultimate, One Soul with Me.

Whoso thus knows himself, and knows his sou
PURUSHA, working through the qualities
With Nature's modes, the light hath come for him!
Whatever flesh he bears, never again
Shall he take on its load. Some few there be
By meditation find the Soul in Self
Self-schooled; and some by long philosophy
And holy life reach thither; some by works.
Some, never so attaining, hear of light
From other lips, and seize, and cleave to it
Worshipping; yea! and those — to teaching true —
Overpass Death!
Wherever, Indian Prince!
Life is — of moving things, or things unmoved,
Plant or still seed — know, what is there hath grown
By bond of Matter and of Spirit: Know
He sees indeed who sees in all alike
The living, lordly Soul; the Soul Supreme,
Imperishable amid the Perishing:
For, whoso thus beholds, in every place,
In every form, the same, one, Living Lord,
Doth no more wrongfulness unto himself,
But goes the highest road which brings to bliss.)
Seeing, he sees, indeed, who sees that works

[1] Wombs.

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

Are Nature's wont, for Soul to use, not love,
Acting, yet not the actor; sees the mass
Of separate living things — each of its kind —
Issue from One, and blend again to One:
Then hath he BRAHMA, he attains!
O Prince!
That Ultimate, High Spirit, Uncreate,
Unqualified, even when it entereth flesh
Taketh no stain of acts, worketh in nought!
Like to th' ethereal air, pervading all,
Which, for sheer subtlety, avoideth taint,
The subtle Soul sits everywhere, unstained:
Like to the light of the all-piercing sun
[Which is not changed by aught it shines upon,]
The Soul's light shineth pure in every place;
And they who, by such eye of wisdom see
How matter, and what deals with it, divide;
And how the Spirit and the flesh have strife,
These wise ones go the way which leads to Life!

HERE ENDS CHAPTER XIII. OF THE

BHAGAVAD-GĪTĀ,

Entitled "Kshetrakshetrajnavibhâgayôgô,"
Or "The Book of Religion by Separation of Matter and Spirit."

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

CHAPTER XIV

KRISHNA:

Yet farther will I open unto thee
This wisdom of all wisdoms, uttermost,
The which possessing, all My saints have passed
To perfectness. On these high verities
Reliant, rising into fellowship
With Me, they are not born again at birth
Of *Kalpas*, nor at *Pralyas* suffer change!

This Universe the Womb is where I plant
Seed of all lives! Thence, Prince of India, comes
Birth to all beings! Whoso, Kunti's Son!
Mothers each mortal form, Brahma conceives,
And I am He that fathers, sending seed!

Sattwan, *Rajas*, and *Tamas*, so are named,
The qualities of Nature, "Soothfastness,"
"Passion," and "Ignorance." These three bind down
The changeless Spirit in the changeful flesh.
Whereof sweet "Soothfastness" — by purity
Living unsullied and enlightened — binds
The sinless Soul to happiness and truth;
And Passion, being kin to appetite,
And breeding impulse and propensity,
Binds the embodied Soul, O Kunti's Son!
By tie of works. But Ignorance, the child
Of Darkness, blinding mortal men, binds down
Their souls to stupor, sloth, and drowsiness.
Yea, Prince of India! Soothfastness binds souls
In pleasant wise to flesh; and Passion binds
By toilsome strain; but Ignorance, which blots
The beams of wisdom, binds the soul to sloth.
Passion and Ignorance, once overcome,
Leave Soothfastness, O Bharata! Where this
With Ignorance are absent, Passion rules;
And Ignorance in hearts not good nor quick.
When at all gateways of the Body shines

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

The Lamp of Knowledge, then may one see well
Soothfastness settled in that city reigns;
Where longing is, and ardor, and unrest,
Impulse to strive and gain, and avarice,
Those spring from Passion — Prince! — engrained; and where
Darkness and dulness, sloth and stupor are,
'Tis Ignorance hath caused them, Kuru Chief!

Moreover, when a soul departeth, fixed
In Soothfastness, it goeth to the place —
Perfect and pure — of those that know all Truth.
If it departeth in set hebetude
Of impulse, it shall go into the world
Of spirits tied to works; and, if it dies
In hardened Ignorance, that blinded soul
Is born anew in some unlighted womb.

The fruit of Soothfastness is true and sweet;
The fruit of lusts is pain and toil; the fruit
Of Ignorance is deeper darkness. Yea!
For Light brings light, and Passion ache to have.
Blindness, bewilderments, and ignorance
Grow forth from Ignorance. Those of the first
Rise ever higher; those of the second mode
Take a mid place; the darkened souls sink back
To lower deeps, loaded with witlessness!

When, watching life, the living man perceives
The only actors are the Qualities,
And knows what lives beyond the Qualities,
Then is he come nigh unto Me!
The Soul,
Thus passing forth from the Three Qualities —
Whereof arise all bodies — overcomes
Birth, Death, Sorrow, and Age; and drinketh deep
The undying wine of Amrit.

ARJUNA:

Oh, my Lord!
Which be the signs to know him that hath gone
Past the Three Modes? How liveth he? What way
Leadeth him safe beyond the threefold modes?

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

KRISHNA:

He who with equanimity surveys
Lustre of goodness, strife of passion, sloth
Of ignorance, not angry if they are,
Not angry when they are not: he who sits
A sojourner and stranger in their midst
Unruffled, standing off, saying — serene —
When troubles break, "These are the Qualities!"
He unto whom — self-centered — grief and joy
Sound as one word; to whose deep-seeing eyes
The clod, the marble, and the gold are one;
Whose equal heart holds the same gentleness
For lovely and unlovely things, firm-set,
Well-pleased in praise and dispraise; satisfied
With honor or dishonor; unto friends
And unto foes alike in tolerance,
Detached from undertakings, — he is named
Surmounter of the Qualities!

And such —
With single, fervent faith adoring Me,
Passing beyond the Qualities, conforms
To Brahma, and attains Me!

For I am
That whereof Brahma is the likeness! Mine
The Amrit is; and Immortality
Is mine; and mine perfect Felicity!

HERE ENDS CHAPTER XIV. OF THE

BHAGAVAD-GĪTĀ,

Entitled "Gunatrayavibhâgayôgô,"
Or "The Book of Religion by Separation from the Qualities."

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

CHAPTER XV

KRISHNA:

Men call the Aśwattha, — the Banyan-tree, —
Which hath its boughs beneath, its roots on high, —
The ever-holy tree. Yea! for its leaves
Are green and waving hymns which whisper Truth!
Who knoweth well the Aśwattha, knows all.

Its branches shoot to heaven and sink to earth.[1]
Even as the deeds of men, which take their birth
From qualities: its silver sprays and blooms,
And all the eager verdure of its girth,

Leap to quick life at touch of sun and air,
As men's lives quicken to the temptings fair
Of wooing sense: its hanging rootlets seek
The soil beneath, helping to hold it there,

As actions wrought amid this world of men
Bind them by ever-tightening bonds again.
If ye knew well the teaching of the Tree,
What its shape saith; and whence it springs; and, then

How it must end, and all the ills of it,
The axe of sharp Detachment ye would whet,
And cleave the clinging snaky roots, and lay
This Aśwattha of sense-life low, — to set

New growths upspringing to that happier sky, —
Which they who reach shall have no day to die,
Nor fade away, nor fall — to Him, I mean,
FATHER and FIRST, Who made the mystery

Of old Creation; for to Him come they
From passion and from dreams who break away;
Who part the bonds constraining them to flesh,
And, — Him, the Highest, worshipping alway —

[1] I do not consider these verses — which are somewhat freely rendered here — "an attack on the authority of the Vedas," but a beautiful lyrical episode, a new "Parable of the fig-tree."

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

No longer grow at mercy of what breeze
Of summer pleasure stirs the sleeping trees,
What blast of tempest tears them, bough and stem.
To the eternal world pass such as these!

Another Sun gleams there! another Moon!
Another Light, — a Light which none shall lack
Whose eyes once see; for those return no more.
They have attained My Uttermost Abode!

When, in this world of manifested life,
The undying Spirit, setting forth from Me,
Taketh on form, it draweth to itself
From Being's storehouse, — which containeth all, —
Senses and intellect. The Sovereign Soul
Thus entering the flesh, or quitting it,
Gathers these up, as the wind gathers scents,
Blowing above the flower-banks. Ear and Eye,
And Touch and Taste, and Smelling, these it takes, —
Yea, and a sentient mind; — linking itself
To sense-things so.

The unenlightened ones
Mark not that Spirit when he goes or comes,
Nor when he takes his pleasure in the form,
Conjoined with qualities; but those see plain
Who have the eyes to see. Holy souls see
Which strive thereto. Enlightened, they behold
That Spirit in themselves; but foolish ones,
Even though they strive, discern not, having hearts
Unkindled, ill-informed!

Know, too, from Me
Shineth the gathered glory of the sun
Which lightens all the world: from Me the moon
Draws silvery beams, and fire fierce loveliness.
I penetrate the clay, and lend all shapes
Their living force; I glide into the plant —
Its root, leaf, bloom — to make the woodland green
With springing sap. Becoming vital warmth,

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

I glow in glad, respiring frames, and pass
With outward and with inward breath to feed
The body with all meats.[1]

For in this world
Being is twofold: the Divided, one;
The Undivided, one. All things that live
Are "the Divided." That which sits apart,
"The Undivided."

Higher still is ONE,
The Highest, holding all, whose Name is LORD,
The Eternal, Sovereign, First! Who fills all worlds,
Sustaining them. And — dwelling thus beyond
Divided Life and Undivided — I
Am called of men and Vedas, God Supreme,
The PURUSHOTTAMA.

Who knows Me thus,
With mind unclouded, knoweth all, dear Prince!
And with his whole soul ever worshippeth Me.

Now is the sacred, secret Mystery
Declared to thee! Who comprehendeth this
Hath wisdom! He is quit of works in bliss!

HERE ENDS CHAPTER XV. OF THE

BHAGAVAD-GĪTĀ,

Entitled "Purushottamapraptiyôgô,"
Or "The Book of Religion by attaining the Supreme."

[1] I omit a verse here, evidently interpolated.

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

CHAPTER XVI

KRISHNA:

Fearlessness, singleness of soul, the will
Always to strive for wisdom; opened hand
And governed appetites; and piety
And love of lonely study; humbleness,
Uprightness, heed to injure nought which lives,
Truthfulness, slowness unto wrath, a mind
That lightly letteth go what others prize;
And equanimity, and charity
Which spieth no man's faults; and tenderness
Towards all that suffer; a contented heart,
Fluttered by no desires; a bearing mild,
Modest, and grave, with manhood nobly mixed
With patience, fortitude, and purity;
An unrevengeful spirit, never given
To rate itself too high; — such be the signs,
O Indian Prince! of him whose feet are set
On that fair path which leads to heavenly birth!

Deceitfulness, and arrogance, and pride,
Quickness to anger, harsh and evil speech,
And ignorance, to its own darkness blind, —
These be the signs, My Prince! of him whose birth
Is fated for the regions of the vile.[1]

The Heavenly Birth brings to deliverance,
So should'st thou know! The birth with Asuras
Brings into bondage. Be thou joyous, Prince
Whose lot is set apart for heavenly Birth.

Two stamps there are marked on all living men,
Divine and Undivine; I spake to thee
By what marks thou shouldst know the Heavenly Man,
Hear from me now of the Unheavenly!

[1] "Of the Asuras," lit.

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

They comprehend not, the Unheavenly,
How souls go forth from Me; nor how they come
Back unto Me: nor is there Truth in these,
Nor purity, nor rule of Life. "This world
Hath not a Law, nor Order, nor a Lord,"
So say they: "nor hath risen up by Cause
Following on Cause, in perfect purposing,
But is none other than a House of Lust."
And, this thing thinking, all those ruined ones —
Of little wit, dark-minded — give themselves
To evil deeds, the curses of their kind.
Surrendered to desires insatiable,
Full of deceitfulness, folly, and pride,
In blindness cleaving to their errors, caught
Into the sinful course, they trust this lie
As it were true — this lie which leads to death —
Finding in Pleasure all the good which is,
And crying "Here it finisheth!"

Ensnared
In nooses of a hundred idle hopes,
Slaves to their passion and their wrath, they buy
Wealth with base deeds, to glut hot appetites;
"Thus much, to-day," they say, "we gained! thereby
Such and such wish of heart shall have its fill;
And this is ours! and th' other shall be ours!
To-day we slew a foe, and we will slay
Our other enemy to-morrow! Look!
Are we not lords? Make we not goodly cheer?
Is not our fortune famous, brave, and great?
Rich are we, proudly born! What other men
Live like to us? Kill, then, for sacrifice!
Cast largesse, and be merry!" So they speak
Darkened by ignorance; and so they fall —
Tossed to and fro with projects, tricked, and bound
In net of black delusion, lost in lusts —
Down to foul Naraka. Conceited, fond,
Stubborn and proud, dead-drunken with the wine
Of wealth, and reckless, all their offerings
Have but a show of reverence, being not made
In piety of ancient faith. Thus vowed
To self-hood, force, insolence, feasting, wrath,

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

These My blasphemers, in the forms they wear
And in the forms they breed, my foemen are,
Hateful and hating; cruel, evil, vile,
Lowest and least of men, whom I cast down
Again, and yet again, at end of lives,
Into some devilish womb, whence — birth by birth —
The devilish wombs re-spawn them, all beguiled;
And, till they find and worship Me, sweet Prince!
Tread they that Nether Road.

The Doors of Hell
Are threefold, whereby men to ruin pass, —
The door of Lust, the door of Wrath, the door
Of Avarice. Let a man shun those three!
He who shall turn aside from entering
All those three gates of Narak, wendeth straight
To find his peace, and comes to Swarga's gate.

. . . . . .[1]

HERE ENDETH CHAPTER XVI. OF THE

BHAGAVAD-GĪTĀ,

Entitled "Daivasurasampadwibhâgayôg,"
Or "The Book of the Separateness of the Divine and Undivine."

[1] I omit the ten concluding shlokas, with Mr. Davies.

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

CHAPTER XVII

ARJUNA:

If men forsake the holy ordinance,
Heedless of Shastras, yet keep faith at heart
And worship, what shall be the state of those,
Great Krishna! *Sattwan, Rajas, Tamas?* Say!

KRISHNA:

Threefold the faith is of mankind, and springs
From those three qualities, — becoming "true,"
Or "passion-stained," or "dark," as thou shalt hear!

The faith of each believer, Indian Prince!
Conforms itself to what he truly is.
Where thou shalt see a worshipper, that one
To what he worships lives assimilate,
[Such as the shrine, so is the votary,]
The "soothfast" souls adore true gods; the souls
Obeying *Rajas* worship Rakshasas [1]
Or Yakshas; and the men of Darkness pray
To Pretas and to Bhutas.[2] Yea, and those
Who practise bitter penance, not enjoined
By rightful rule — penance which hath its root
In self-sufficient, proud hypocrisies —
Those men, passion-beset, violent, wild,
Torturing — the witless ones — My elements
Shut in fair company within their flesh,
(Nay, Me myself, present within the flesh!)
Know them to devils devoted, not to Heaven!
For like as foods are threefold for mankind
In nourishing, so is there threefold way
Of worship, abstinence, and almsgiving!
Hear this of Me! there is a food which brings
Force, substance, strength, and health, and joy to live,
Being well-seasoned, cordial, comforting,

[1] Rakshasas and Yakshas are unembodied but capricious beings of great power, gifts, and beauty, sometimes also of benignity.

[2] These are spirits of evil, wandering ghosts.

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

The "Soothfast" meat. And these be foods which bring
Aches and unrests, and burning blood, and grief,
Being too biting, heating, salt, and sharp,
And therefore craved by too strong appetite.
And there is foul food — kept from over-night,[1]
Savorless, filthy, which the foul will eat,
A feast of rottenness, meet for the lips
Of such as love the "Darkness."

Thus with rites; —
A sacrifice not for rewardment made,
Offered in rightful wise, when he who vows
Sayeth, with heart devout, "This I should do!"
Is "Soothfast" rite. But sacrifice for gain,
Offered for good repute, be sure that this,
O Best of Bharatas! is Rajas-rite,
With stamp of "passion." And a sacrifice
Offered against the laws, with no due dole
Of food-giving, with no accompaniment
Of hallowed hymn, nor largesse to the priests,
In faithless celebration, call it vile,
The deed of "Darkness!" — lost!

Worship of gods
Meriting worship; lowly reverence
Of Twice-borns, Teachers, Elders; Purity,
Rectitude, and the Brahmacharya's vow,
And not to injure any helpless thing, —
These make a true religiousness of Act.

Words causing no man woe, words ever true,
Gentle and pleasing words, and those ye say
In murmured reading of a Sacred Writ, —
These make the true religiousness of Speech.

Serenity of soul, benignity,
Sway of the silent Spirit, constant stress
To sanctify the Nature, — these things make
Good rite, and true religiousness of Mind.

[1] *Yâtayaman*, food which has remained after the watches of the night. In India this would probably "go bad."

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

Such threefold faith, in highest piety
Kept, with no hope of gain, by hearts devote,
Is perfect work of *Sattwan*, true belief.

Religion shown in act of proud display
To win good entertainment, worship, fame,
Such — say I — is of *Rajas*, rash and vain.

Religion followed by a witless will
To torture self, or come at power to hurt
Another, — 'tis of *Tamas*, dark and ill.

The gift lovingly given, when one shall say
"Now must I gladly give!" when he who takes
Can render nothing back; made in due place,
Due time, and to a meet recipient,
Is gift of *Sattwan*, fair and profitable.

The gift selfishly given, where to receive
Is hoped again, or when some end is sought,
Or where the gift is proffered with a grudge,
This is of *Rajas*, stained with impulse, ill.

The gift churlishly flung, at evil time,
In wrongful place, to base recipient,
Made in disdain or harsh unkindliness,
Is gift of *Tamas*, dark; it doth not bless![1]

HERE ENDETH CHAPTER XVII. OF THE

BHAGAVAD-GĪTĀ,

Entitled "Sraddhatrayavibhâgayôg,"
Or "The Book of Religion by the Threefold Kinds of Faith."

I omit the concluding shlokas, as of very doubtful authenticity.

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

CHAPTER XVIII

ARJUNA:

Fain would I better know, Thou Glorious One!
The very truth — Heart's Lord! — of *Sannyâs*,
Abstention; and Renunciation, Lord!
Tyâga; and what separates these twain!

KRISHNA:

The poets rightly teach that *Sannyâs*
Is the foregoing of all acts which spring
Out of desire; and their wisest say
Tyâga is renouncing fruit of acts.

There be among the saints some who have held
All action sinful, and to be renounced;
And some who answer "Nay! the goodly acts —
As worship, penance, alms — must be performed!"
Hear now My sentence, Best of Bharatas!

'Tis well set forth, O Chaser of thy Foes!
Renunciation is of threefold form,
And Worship, Penance, Alms, not to be stayed;
Nay, to be gladly done; for all those three
Are purifying waters for true souls!

Yet must be practised even those high works
In yielding up attachment, and all fruit
Produced by works. This is My judgment, Prince!
This My insuperable and fixed decree!

Abstaining from a work by right prescribed
Never is meet! So to abstain doth spring
From "Darkness," and Delusion teacheth it.
Abstaining from a work grievous to flesh,
When one saith " 'Tis unpleasing!" this is null!
Such an one acts from "passion;" nought of gain
Wins his Renunciation! But, Arjun!

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

Abstaining from attachment to the work,
Abstaining from rewardment in the work,
While yet one doeth it full faithfully,
Saying, "'Tis right to do!" that is "true" act
And abstinence! Who doeth duties so,
Unvexed if his work fail, if it succeed
Unflattered, in his own heart justified,
Quit of debates and doubts, his is "true" act:
For, being in the body, none may stand
Wholly aloof from act; yet, who abstains
From profit of his acts is abstinent.

The fruit of labors, in the lives to come,
Is threefold for all men, — Desirable,
And Undesirable, and mixed of both;
But no fruit is at all where no work was.

Hear from me, Long-armed Lord! the makings five
Which go to every act, in Sânkhya taught
As necessary. First the force; and then
The agent; next, the various instruments;
Fourth, the especial effort; fifth, the God.
What work soever any mortal doth
Of body, mind, or speech, evil or good,
By these five doth he that. Which being thus,
Whoso, for lack of knowledge, seeth himself
As the sole actor, knoweth nought at all
And seeth nought. Therefore, I say, if one —
Holding aloof from self — with unstained mind
Should slay all yonder host, being bid to slay,
He doth not slay; he is not bound thereby!

Knowledge, the thing known, and the mind which knows,
These make the threefold starting-ground of act.
The act, the actor, and the instrument,
These make the threefold total of the deed.
But knowledge, agent, act, are differenced
By three dividing qualities. Hear now
Which be the qualities dividing them.

There is "true" Knowledge. Learn thou it is this:
To see one changeless Life in all the Lives,
And in the Separate, One Inseparable.

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

There is imperfect Knowledge: that which sees
The separate existences apart,
And, being separated, holds them real.
There is false Knowledge: that which blindly clings
To one as if 'twere all, seeking no Cause,
Deprived of light, narrow, and dull, and "dark."

There is "right" Action: that which — being enjoined —
Is wrought without attachment, passionlessly,
For duty, not for love, nor hate, nor gain.
There is "vain" Action: that which men pursue
Aching to satisfy desires, impelled
By sense of self, with all-absorbing stress:
This is of *Rajas* — passionate and vain.
There is "dark" Action: when one doth a thing
Heedless of issues, heedless of the hurt
Or wrong for others, heedless if he harm
His own soul — 'tis of *Tamas*, black and bad!

There is the "rightful" doer. He who acts
Free from self-seeking, humble, resolute,
Steadfast, in good or evil hap the same,
Content to do aright — he "truly" acts.
There is th' "impassioned" doer. He that works
From impulse, seeking profit, rude and bold
To overcome, unchastened; slave by turns
Of sorrow and of joy: of *Rajas* he!
And there be evil doers; loose of heart,
Low-minded, stubborn, fraudulent, remiss,
Dull, slow, despondent — children of the "dark."

Hear, too, of Intellect and Steadfastness
The threefold separation, Conqueror-Prince!
How these are set apart by Qualities.

Good is the Intellect which comprehends
The coming forth and going back of life,
What must be done, and what must not be done,
What should be feared, and what should not be feared,
What binds and what emancipates the soul:
That is of *Sattwan*, Prince! of "soothfastness."
Marred is the Intellect which, knowing right

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

And knowing wrong, and what is well to do
And what must not be done, yet understands
Nought with firm mind, nor as the calm truth is:
This is of *Rajas*, Prince! and "passionate!"
Evil is Intellect which, wrapped in gloom,
Looks upon wrong as right, and sees all things
Contrariwise of Truth. O Pritha's Son!
That is of *Tamas*, "dark" and desperate!

Good is the steadfastness whereby a man
Masters his beats of heart, his very breath
Of life, the action of his senses; fixed
In never-shaken faith and piety:
That is of *Sattwan*, Prince! "soothfast" and fair!
Stained is the steadfastness whereby a man
Holds to his duty, purpose, effort, end,
For life's sake, and the love of goods to gain,
Arjuna! 'tis of *Rajas*, passion-stamped!
Sad is the steadfastness wherewith the fool
Cleaves to his sloth, his sorrow, and his fears,
His folly and despair. This — Pritha's Son! —
Is born of *Tamas*, "dark" and miserable!

Hear further, Chief of Bharatas! from Me
The threefold kinds of Pleasure which there be.

Good Pleasure is the pleasure that endures,
Banishing pain for aye; bitter at first
As poison to the soul, but afterward
Sweet as the taste of Amrit. Drink of that!
It springeth in the Spirit's deep content.
And painful Pleasure springeth from the bond
Between the senses and the sense-world. Sweet
As Amrit is its first taste, but its last
Bitter as poison. 'Tis of *Rajas*, Prince!
And foul and "dark" the Pleasure is which springs
From sloth and sin and foolishness; at first
And at the last, and all the way of life
The soul bewildering. 'Tis of *Tamas*, Prince!

For nothing lives on earth, nor 'midst the gods
In utmost heaven, but hath its being bound
With these three Qualities, by Nature framed.

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

The work of Brahmans, Kshatriyas, Vaiśyas,
And Śudras, O thou Slayer of thy Foes!
Is fixed by reason of the Qualities
Planted in each:

A Brahman's virtues, Prince!
Born of his nature, are serenity,
Self-mastery, religion, purity,
Patience, uprightness, learning, and to know
The truth of things which be. A Kshatriya's pride,
Born of his nature, lives in valor, fire,
Constancy, skilfulness, spirit in fight,
And open-handedness and noble mien,
As of a lord of men. A Vaiśya's task,
Born with his nature, is to till the ground,
Tend cattle, venture trade. A Śudra's state,
Suiting his nature, is to minister.

Whoso performeth — diligent, content —
The work allotted him, whate'er it be,
Lays hold of perfectness! Hear how a man
Findeth perfection, being so content:
He findeth it through worship — wrought by work —
Of HIM that is the Source of all which lives,
Of HIM by Whom the universe was stretched.

Better thine own work is, though done with fault,
Than doing others' work, ev'n excellently.
He shall not fall in sin who fronts the task
Set him by Nature's hand! Let no man leave
His natural duty, Prince! though it bear blame!
For every work hath blame, as every flame
Is wrapped in smoke! Only that man attains
Perfect surcease of work whose work was wrought
With mind unfettered, soul wholly subdued,
Desires for ever dead, results renounced.

Learn from me, Son of Kunti! also this,
How one, attaining perfect peace, attains
BRAHM, the supreme, the highest height of all!

Devoted — with a heart grown pure, restrained
In lordly self-control, foregoing wiles

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

Of song and senses, freed from love and hate,
Dwelling 'mid solitudes, in diet spare,
With body, speech, and will tamed to obey,
Ever to holy meditation vowed,
From passions liberate, quit of the Self,
Of arrogance, impatience, anger, pride;
Freed from surroundings, quiet, lacking nought —
Such an one grows to oneness with the BRAHM;
Such an one, growing one with BRAHM, serene,
Sorrows no more, desires no more; his soul,
Equally loving all that lives, loves well
Me, Who have made them, and attains to Me.
By this same love and worship doth he know
Me as I am, how high and wonderful,
And knowing, straightway enters into Me.
And whatsoever deeds he doeth — fixed
In Me, as in his refuge — he hath won
For ever and for ever by My grace
Th' Eternal Rest! So win thou! In thy thoughts
Do all thou dost for Me! Renounce for Me!
Sacrifice heart and mind and will to Me!
Live in the faith of Me! In faith of Me
All dangers thou shalt vanquish, by My grace,
But, trusting to thyself and heeding not,
Thou can'st but perish! If this day thou say'st
Relying on thyself, "I will not fight!"
Vain will the purpose prove! thy qualities
Would spur thee to the war. What thou dost shun,
Misled by fair illusions, thou wouldst seek
Against thy will, when the task comes to thee
Waking the promptings in thy nature set.
There lives a Master in the hearts of men
Maketh their deeds, by subtle pulling-strings,
Dance to what tune HE will. With all thy soul
Trust Him, and take Him for thy succor, Prince!
So — only so, Arjuna! — shalt thou gain —
By grace of Him — the uttermost repose,
The Eternal Place!

Thus hath been opened thee
This Truth of Truths, the Mystery more hid
Than any secret mystery. Meditate!
And — as thou wilt — then act!

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

Nay! but once more
Take My last word, My utmost meaning have!
Precious thou art to Me; right well-beloved!
Listen! I tell thee for thy comfort this.
Give Me thy heart! adore Me! serve Me! cling
In faith and love and reverence to Me!
So shalt thou come to Me! I promise true,
For thou art sweet to Me!
And let go those —
Rites and writ duties! Fly to Me alone!
Make Me thy single refuge! I will free
Thy soul from all its sins! Be of good cheer!

[Hide, the holy Krishna saith,
This from him that hath no faith,
Him that worships not, nor seeks
Wisdom's teaching when she speaks:
Hide it from all men who mock;
But, wherever, 'mid the flock
Of My lovers, one shall teach
This divinest, wisest, speech —
Teaching in the faith to bring
Truth to them, and offering
Of all honor unto Me —
Unto Brahma cometh he!
Nay, and nowhere shall ye find
Any man of all mankind
Doing dearer deed for Me;
Nor shall any dearer be
In My earth. Yea, furthermore,
Whoso reads this converse o'er
Held by Us upon the plain,
Pondering piously and fain,
He hath paid Me sacrifice!
(Krishna speaketh in this wise!)
Yea, and whoso, full of faith,
Heareth wisely what it saith,
Heareth meekly, — when he dies,
Surely shall his spirit rise
To those regions where the Blest,
Free of flesh, in joyance rest.]

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

Hath this been heard by thee, O Indian Prince!
With mind intent? hath all the ignorance —
Which bred thy trouble — vanished, My Arjun?

ARJUNA:

Trouble and ignorance are gone! the Light
Hath come unto me, by Thy favor, Lord!
Now am I fixed! my doubt is fled away!
According to Thy word, so will I do!

SANJAYA:

Thus gathered I the gracious speech of Krishna, O my King!
Thus have I told, with heart a-thrill, this wise and wondrous thing
By great Vyâsa's learning writ, how Krishna's self made known
The Yôga, being Yôga's Lord. So is the high truth shown!
And aye, when I remember, O Lord my King, again
Arjuna and the God in talk, and all this holy strain,
Great is my gladness: when I muse that splendor, passing speech,
Of Hari, visible and plain, there is no tongue to reach
My marvel and my love and bliss. O Archer-Prince! all hail!
O Krishna, Lord of Yôga! surely there shall not fail
Blessing, and victory, and power, for Thy most mighty sake,
Where this song comes of Arjun, and how with God he spake.

HERE ENDS, WITH CHAPTER XVIII.,

Entitled "Mokshasanyâsayôg,"

Or "The Book of Religion by Deliverance and Renunciation,"

THE BHAGAVAD-GĪTĀ.

ŚUBHAMASTU SARVAJAGATÂN.

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

INDEX OF WORDS AND SUBJECTS

Action, function of Material Nature, 39–41, 59
  if unselfish, does no harm, 57–61
  (*See also* Discipline, Karma)
Agni, 71n.
ahaṃkāra, 39
ahiṃsā, "harmlessness," 83
ākāśa, 15, 16
Allah, 11
Anger, 82
Animism, 9
Arjuna, 3, 38, 52n., 53, 54, 70, 71
Arnold, Sir E., 4, 54
Arrangement of ideas in Gītā, 70, 91
Aryans, 10
asat, 16
Asceticism, as way of salvation, 27–29, 56, 57, 73
  opposed in Gītā, 56–58, 68
  (*See also* Quietism)
Atharva Veda, 9, 12–14
Atheism, 82
  (*See also* Materialists)
ātman, 12, 16, 17, 19, 20, 38, 40, 49, 63
Authorship of Gītā, 5
Avarice, 82
avatārs, 53
avidyā, 24

Bacon, Roger, 8
bhakti, 26, 71, 75
  (*See also* Devotion)
Bhandarkar, Sir R. G., 31n.
Body (*see* Material Nature, Soul)
Boehme, Jacob, 37n.
Brahmā (god), 31, 52n., 54
"Brahma," Emerson's poem on, 5
brahman, 14–17, 20, 22–24, 26, 29, 31, 48–52, *et passim*
  identified with matter or non-soul, 51–52
  relation to God, 48–52
Brāhmaṇas, 9, 13, 16, 20, 32
brahmanirvāṇa, 23
Breath (*see* Life-breath)
Buddha, Buddhism, 22n., 23, 26, 57, 68, 83
buddhi, 39

Castes, duties of, 59
Categorical imperative, 60
Christian mystics, 37n., 91
Christianity, 26, 53, 71n., 75

Date of Gītā, 5
Death, hour of, 74
Deed (*see* Karma)
Deity (*see* God)
"Demoniac" men, 82
Desire, as cosmic force (*see* Kāma, Will)
  as cause of rebirth, 22, 57
  as root of all sin, 82
Devotion, as help to salvation, in Upaniṣads, 26
  to God, in Gītā, 49, 70–76, 81, 82, 91
  in Christianity, 71n.
  (See also *bhakti*)
Dhātar, 12
Discipline of action, 58, 62–69, 72–74
Doubt, 62
Duty, 57–61, 74, 78

"Easy way" sought by Gītā, 49, 65, 92
Emerson, 5
Ether, 15
Evil, problem of, 45–47
Evolution, 39, 40, 51
Existent, The, 16

Fervor (see *tapas*)
Field and Field-knower (Body and Soul), 41, 42, 44, 50
Fighting (*see* War)

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

First Principle, Vedic, 11–17
"Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay," 8

God, double nature of, 50–52
  dimitation of, 46, 47
  meditation on, at death, 74–75
  nature of (in Gītā), 44–54
  prehistory of the Gītā's, 30–33
  relation to human soul, 37, 44, 45
  salvation by grace of, 26, 27, 71–74, 92
  transcendance of, 47
  union with, 23, 38, 72–75
  (*See also* Devotion, Incarnation)
"Golden Rule," 60, 61, 83
Greene, Robert, 8
guṇas, of matter, 39–42, 50, 59, 68n.

Harmlessness (see *ahiṃsā*)
Henotheism, 10

Identification, 13
Ignorance, cause of evils, 24
Incarnation, of God, 3, 52–53
Inconsistencies in Gītā, 38n., 49, 52, 77–79, 91
Indifference recommended, 57, 64, 67–69
Instruction, as help to salvation, 63
Intuition, 4, 91

Jains, 42, 83
Jesus, 26
jñāna-yoga, 64

Kāla, 13
Kāma, 13, 16
Kant, 16n., 60
Karma, doctrine of, 20, 21, 24, 55–61, 73
  (*See also* Action)
karma-yoga, 64, 65
Kaṭha Upaniṣad, 6
Killing (*see* War)
Knowledge, power of, 7, 8, 13, 14, 17, 19, 62, 63
  = virtue, 24, 81
  way of salvation by, 24–26, 29, 42, 62–71, 78, 81, 91
Kṛṣṇa, 3, 30–33, 38, 53, 60, 71

Life-breath, 12, 15, 16
Loathing, 82
Logic, Gītā's attitude towards, 4, 7, 91, 92
Love of God (*see* Devotion)

Magic, 7, 8, 10, 13, 14, 25, 28n.
Mahābhārata, 3, 38n.
Man, cosmic, 12, 15–17
manas, 16, 39
Material Nature, 39–44, 50–52
Materialists, 79, 80, 82
Matter (*see* Material Nature)
māyā, 19n., 43, 50–52
Meditation, 63
Moderation, 68
Mohammed, 26
Monism, Vedic, 11–17
  Upaniṣadic, 16, 18, 19, 30, 33
  in Gītā, 44, 45, 48–51
Monotheism, Vedic starts towards, 11, 15
  in Upaniṣads, 31
  in early popular religions of India, 30–33
  in Gītā, 26, 30–33, 44–54
Morality, transcended by perfected soul, 24, 25
  as help to salvation, 25, 81
  practical, in Gītā, 81–84
Mystic vision of God, 53, 54, 70
Mysticism, 4, 37n., 50, 52–54, 91, 92

Name, 14
Nature-worship, 9
neti, neti, 12
Nirvāṇa, 23, 42, 55, 67, 73
Non-existent, The, 16

Oldenberg, H., 13n., 39n., 68n.
om, sacred syllable, 45, 75

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

One, The (*see* Monism, Monotheism)
Orthodoxy, Hindu, 77–80

Pacifism (*see* War, *ahiṃsā*)
Pairs of opposites, 57, 58
Pantheism, 44–48
Parallelism between Man and Universe, 15–17, 37
Parameṣṭhin, 12
Perfected State, 21–24
(*See also* Nirvāṇa)
Pessimism, 22, 29, 55
Philosophic Systems (*see* Systems)
Philosophy, Hindu contrasted with western, 6–8
Poetic character of Gītā, 4
Pragmatism, 92
Prajāpati, 11, 12
Prakṛti (*see* Material Nature)
Prāṇa, 12, 15, 16
Priests, Vedic, 9, 10, 14
accused of selfishness, 78
Puruṣa, as First Principle, 12, 15, 47, 75
(soul of man), 38, 44

Qualities (see *guṇas*)
Quietism, 58, 59
(*See also* Asceticism)
Quotations of older works in Gītā, 5, 6, 27

rajas, 39, 42, 68n.
Rationalism, 4
(*See also* Logic, Mysticism)
Rebirth, 20, 21, 55, 56
Redeath, 20, 63
Religions, Gītā's attitude towards other, 77–80
Retribution, 21
(*See also* Karma)
Rig Veda, 5, 9–12, 14–16, 31–33, 47, 71n.
Ritualism, 9–11, 14, 15, 77–79
Ritualistic elements in Vedic Monism, 14–17
Rohita, 12

Sacrifice, 59n., 62, 77–80
(*See also* Ritualism)
Salvation, ways of, in Upaniṣads, 24 ff.
in general Hinduism, 29
in Gītā, 48, 62–76
Śaṃkara, 43
Sāṃkhya, meaning of the word, 64
in the Gītā, 63–66, 69
later, 18, 19n., 23, 40n., 43, 64n., 65n.
saṃnyāsa, 64, 65
sat, 16
sattva, 39, 42, 68n.
Scepticism, 12
Schopenhauer, 13
Self, 16, 17, 19
in others, 60, 61, 83
(*See also* Soul)
Self-hypnotism, 63
Senses, 39
Sex in cosmic relations, 51, 52
Śiva, 31, 52n.
skambha, 13
Socrates, 24, 81
Soul, distinguished from body, 3, 20–21, 37–43, 50, 62
immortality of, 3, 38
a part of God, 37
human, = First Principle, 19, 37
(*See also* Self, *ātman*)
Space, 16
summum bonum, 8, 20, 24
(*See also* Nirvāṇa, Perfected State, Salvation)
Sun, as First Principle, 12
Systems of Philosophy in India, 6, 7, 18

tamas, 39, 42, 68n.
tapas, 15, 27–29
Time, as First Principle, 13
Transcendance of the One (or God) beyond all, 15, 47
Transmigration (*see* Rebirth)
Trimūrti, 31, 52n.

Upaniṣads, 6–8, 12, 16, 18–33 *et passim*

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

Vedānta, 18, 19n., 38n., 43, 51
Vidhātar, 12
vidyā, 8
Violence (*see* War, *ahiṃsā*)
Viṣṇu, 31–33, 52n.
Viṣṇuites, 3, 53
Viśvakarman, 11

War, 38n., 59, 60, 83, 84
Will, as cosmic force, 13, 16
Word, 14
Wrath, 82

Yahweh, 11, 30
Yoga, meaning of the word, 63, 64
in the Gītā, 63–69, 72, 73, 75, 78, 79
later, 19n., 43, 65n., 68n.
yogin, 61, 66

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

INDEX OF PASSAGES QUOTED OR REFERRED TO

Page

Rig Veda:
10.90 . . . . . 12, 47
10.129 . . . . . 11, 16, 27

Atharva Veda:
10.8.43, 44 13

Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa:
10.3.5.11 14

UPANIṢADS

Bṛhad Āraṇyaka Up.:
1.4.10 19
3.4.1 19
3.4.2 . . . . . 22, 38
3.7.15 19
3.9.26 12
4.3.10 19
4.3.19 ff. 23
4.3.22 . . . . . 22, 24
4.3.23 ff. 23
4.3.32, 33 23
4.4.3 21
4.4.5 . . . . . 21, 22
4.4.6 22
4.5.13 23
4.5.15 23

Chāndogya Up.:
6.8.7 19

Kaṭha Up.:
2.7 25
2.20 27
2.23 27
2.24 24

Kauṣītaki Up.:
1.4 24

Muṇḍaka Up.:
3.2.9 24

Praśna Up.:
5.5 26

Śvetāśvatara Up.:
6.21, 23 27

Taittirīya Up.:
3.2 ff. 29

BHAGAVAD GĪTĀ

CHAPTER 2

Verse	*Page*	*Verse*	*Page*	*Verse*	*Page*
11	38	24	37, 41	38	58
13	21, 55	25	38	39	64
17	37	26, 27	38	42, 43	78
18	38	29	25	45, 46	78
19	5	30	38, 64	47–72	64, 67
20	38	31	59	47	58, 64
22	21, 55	34 ff.	60	48	64
23	41	37	60	52, 53	79

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

CHAPTER 3

Verse	*Page*	*Verse*	*Page*	*Verse*	*Page*
1	60	13	77	30–32	60, 73
3	64	17, 18	68	33	59
4, 5	59, 64	19	58	34	57, 82
6, 7	58	20–25	58	35	60
8	58	27	40	37	57, 82
9	59, 77	28	40	42	40
12	77	29	41		

CHAPTER 4

Verse	*Page*	*Verse*	*Page*	*Verse*	*Page*
6	52	23–33	78	36	62, 81
7, 8	53	23	59, 78	37	62
9, 10	62	30	78	38	66
12	79	31	78	40	62
14	58	33	62, 78	41, 42	62
19–23	57	35	61, 83		

CHAPTER 5

Verse	*Page*	*Verse*	*Page*	*Verse*	*Page*
2	64, 65	8, 9	40	18	60, 83
3	57	10	52	19	61
4	64, 65	12	66	20	58
5	65	13	42	21–24	67
6	65	15	41	25	83
7	61, 83	16, 17	63	27, 28	56

CHAPTER 6

Verse	*Page*	*Verse*	*Page*	*Verse*	*Page*
1	58	20–23	68	37–45	66
9	61, 83	29	61, 83	46	66
10–14	56	30	44, 61	47	66, 73
15	73	31	44		
16	68	32	61, 83		

CHAPTER 7

Verse	*Page*	*Verse*	*Page*	*Verse*	*Page*
3	70	11	46	20	79
4, 5	50	12	46, 47	21, 22	79
6	45	13, 14	50	23	80
7	45	15	81	24	50
8–10	45	19	62, 70	26	53

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

CHAPTER 8

Verse	*Page*	*Verse*	*Page*	*Verse*	*Page*
5	75	10	75	16	73
6	74	13	75	18, 19	51
7	72	14	70	20–22	50, 51
9	48	15	55, 70	23–27	74

CHAPTER 9

Verse	*Page*	*Verse*	*Page*	*Verse*	*Page*
4	47	19	45	27, 28	74
5	47	20	79	29	72
7, 8	51	21	79	30–32	72
9	58	22	72	30	81
10	51	23–25	80	34	72
17, 18	48	26	74		

CHAPTER 10

Verse	*Page*	*Verse*	*Page*	*Verse*	*Page*
2	53, 79	12	48	34	45
3	62	14	53, 79	36	46
4	46	15	53	38	46
5	46, 83	20	45	39	45
9	75	21–37	47	41, 42	47
10	72	23	31		
11	72	32	45		

CHAPTER 11

Verse	*Page*	*Verse*	*Page*	*Verse*	*Page*
8	53	16	54	52, 53	79
11	54	19	54	54	71
12	54	24, 30	31	55	72, 76
13	54	47	53		
15	31, 54	48	53, 79		

CHAPTER 12

Verse	*Page*	*Verse*	*Page*	*Verse*	*Page*
1–5	48	8	72	13–20	75
6, 7	72	9–11	73		

CHAPTER 13

Verse	*Page*	*Verse*	*Page*	*Verse*	*Page*
1	41, 44	12–17	49	27	37
2	44, 50	19–21	41	28	61, 83
5, 6	39	23	42	29	40
7–11	82	24, 25	63	30–33	50
7	83	26	42		

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

CHAPTER 14

Verse	*Page*	*Verse*	*Page*	*Verse*	*Page*
1 ff.	62	19	40	26	73
3, 4	52	20	42	27	49
5	42	22–25	63, 69		
5–18	39	24	60		

CHAPTER 15

Verse	*Page*	*Verse*	*Page*	*Verse*	*Page*
6	23	7	37	16, 17	44
7–10	41	12–15	45		

CHAPTER 16

Entire chapter . . 82

Verse	*Page*	*Verse*	*Page*	*Verse*	*Page*
1–3	82	8	79, 82	21	82
2	83	13 ff.	82	22	81, 82
5	82	18	82	23	82
7	82	20	82		

CHAPTER 17

Entire chapter . . 39

Verse	*Page*	*Verse*	*Page*	*Verse*	*Page*
6	58	11	78	14	83

CHAPTER 18

Verse	*Page*	*Verse*	*Page*	*Verse*	*Page*
2	58	41–44	59	56, 57	74
3	56, 59	45–48	60	58, 59	60, 74
5, 6	59, 78	46	74	60	59
11	58	51–53	82	61	45
23	59	55	71	66	72, 80

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

DATE DUE

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai

Indian Council for Cultural Relations
New Delhi.

Extract from Rules:—

Books are issued for fourteen days only.

A fine of one anna per day will be charged for each volume kept over time.

Books lost, defaced or injured in any way shall have to be replaced by the borrowers.

Digitization by Arya Samaj Charitable Foundation, Chennai